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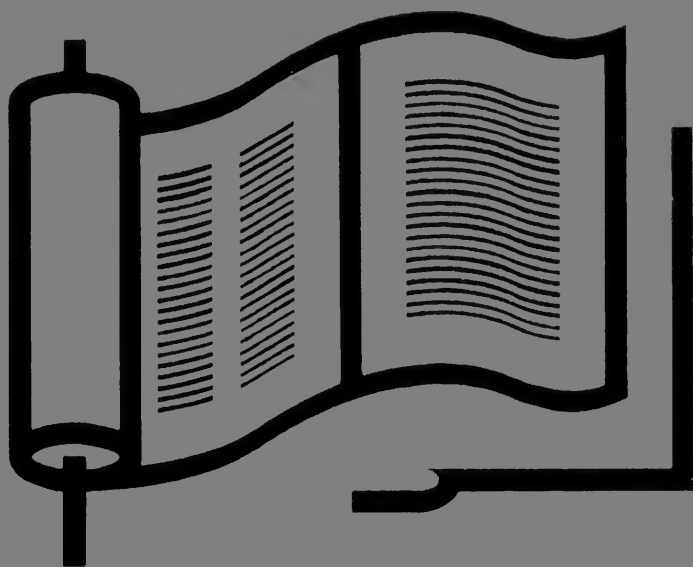
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# GRACE THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

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# A SUMMARY EVALUATION OF OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW LEXICA, TRANSLATIONS, AND PHILOLOGY IN LIGHT OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN HEBREW LEXICOGRAPHIC AND SEMITIC LINGUISTIC HISTORY

W. CREIGHTON MARLOWE

*Any evaluation of an Old Testament lexicon or translation must consider what quantity and quality of Hebraic and Semitic comparative data were available when a particular volume or version was written. First, major OT lexical developments are evaluated by surveying their two main historical periods—from the first known lexicon in A.D. 913 to the present—in light of the most significant Semitic philological advances. Then guidelines and suggestions are given for choosing which lexica to purchase in light of the perspective gained from the historical overview. Next, translations of the Bible—from the LXX of ca. 250 B.C. to the present, through the same periods as the lexica—are evaluated along similar lines; and again advice is offered for selecting the best (primarily English) version of the Bible for personal, private, and public use today. Finally, certain Semitic languages are evaluated as to their individual, collective, and practical values for enabling the translator and lexicographer to understand more accurately the possible meaning(s) of some Hebrew words. Included as an appendix is a helpful chart displaying a time-line of the highlights in Hebrew lexicographic and related linguistic history.*

\* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

OLD Testament lexica, translations, and philology are in a constant state of development. The continuing and abundant advances in linguistic knowledge make regular revision necessary. Consequently, the final or perfect lexicon or Bible version has not been achieved.

Many agree that the recent discovery and decipherment of a lost Semitic language at Ebla will not be the last such revelation coming from the science of archaeology. Any evaluation of an Old Testament lexicon or translation must consider what quantity and quality of Hebraic and Semitic comparative data were available when they were written. The value of a Semitic language for Hebrew philology is judged in light of its extent of textual information and the nature of its relationship to Hebrew.

#### THE LEXICA EVALUATED

This evaluation, like those following, will be a general, summary appraisal of the subject—lexica in this case—by periods. Each lexicon will not be examined in depth; but the nature of the philological context—affecting the potential of each to describe accurately the usage of the entire Biblical Hebrew vocabulary—will be reviewed.

#### *During the Formative Period (A.D. 913–1810)*

Hebrew lexica written during this era greatly differed as to how well the Hebrew language was understood when each was composed. Lexicographers such as Saadiah, Ben Abraham, and Saruq worked prior to the establishment of the rule of triradical roots during the last half of the tenth century. Arabic was the major comparative source for solving lexical problems throughout the period. Akkadian and Ugaritic were totally unknown. The creation of Hebrew linguistics and philology took place in the eleventh and first half of the twelfth centuries. Yet monoliteral roots were still recognized when Ibn Janach's dictionary appeared in the 1040s. Not until ca. 1437–45 did the first Hebrew concordance come on the scene. Christian lexicographers (1506–) such as Reuchlin, Pagninus, Buxtorf, and Simonis depended on Jewish tradition almost exclusively. For the most part, however, Jewish lexicographic scholarship ceased from ca. 1500–1700. Christian dictionaries were heir to few advances during these years. Lexica produced before 1753 were prior to Robert Lowth's revelation of the true nature (parallelism) of Hebrew poetry. Lexica of the formative period of Hebrew lexicography, in general, clearly were very inadequate by today's standards; but the major works apparently were thorough and quite extensive. The lexicographers were highly skilled linguists for their day and very competent at handling difficult forms in light of their contexts. Present students of the Hebrew Bible can profit from these lexica by observing the often insightful interpretations of medieval philologists working without the elaborate tools and Semitic data available today.

*During the Scientific Period (A.D. 1810–)*

Hebrew lexica of the scientific period of Hebrew lexicography were developed during two distinct sub-periods: (1) the classical years dominated by the lexicographic innovations and insights of Wilhelm Gesenius; and (2) the modern years characterized by an unparalleled recovery and development of Semitic linguistic aids, which included the discovery and decipherment of Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Eblaite.

*During the classical years (1810–71)*

Hebrew lexica compiled during these years were all influenced—as all subsequent lexica—by the scientific method that Gesenius brought to lexicography. Most of the dictionaries were either revisions or translations of Gesenius' works. Akkadian was discovered and deciphered during the last half of this period; but no lexicon incorporated its data until 1871, which marked the beginning of a new stage in Hebrew lexicography. Thus Arabic, at times abused, was still the major comparative source for solving lexical difficulties. Those who translated Gesenius, like Samuel P. Tregelles, gave few thoughts of their own and, overall, tried to represent only Gesenius' lexicography. Also following Gesenius, these lexica sought to place every Old Testament Hebrew word under a basic root, whether verified or theoretical. For some lexically difficult words, unfortunate comparisons to Indo-European languages were made in order to postulate a definition. Outside of the initial advances Gesenius brought to the science of lexicography and the use of comparative information, few advances occurred in Semitic linguistics. Moabite was discovered in 1868. The value of these lexica following Gesenius have been indebted to his pioneering efforts and now classical approach, which have made his lexica standard works. Although the lexica of the classical years are now outdated, they offer the results of Gesenius' genius for consideration, especially for some lexical problems in the Old Testament.

*During the modern years (1871–)*

The modern years of Hebrew lexicography were marked by the most rapid developments in Semitic philology. Many advances were introduced into the lexica, as a result, which were never before possible. Since 1871 Akkadian and Ugaritic linguistic information has become available; the former was discovered earlier but utilized since the date given, while the latter was discovered in 1928–30 but not used in a lexicon until 1953. Other linguistic developments since the last third of the nineteenth century were the plethora of related Semitic literary finds and the recovery of the language and literature of ancient

Ebla. All of this has allowed lexicographers to identify homonyms which lexicographers without this information were unable to recognize or substantiate. One of Gesenius' major weaknesses was his failure to list many homonyms as separate entries because he equated them with the same basic root.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of proper and unforced homonymic roots is a challenge which had a far less chance of success before the comparative data from Semitic philology—since the beginning of the twentieth century—were available. In this light and for the American scholar, the lexica by Brown, Driver, and Briggs; Köhler and Baumgartner; and Holladay<sup>2</sup> should all be consulted at the very least when a lexical question arises. These, naturally, differ in the quantity and quality of their information.

### *Choosing a Lexicon*

A question frequently asked by seminary students is: "Which lexicon is the one to purchase?" This immediately demonstrates their great misunderstanding of the lexica they use and the history of lexicographic development. Moisés Silva wrote:

Lexicology takes priority in the exegetical process. We may pursue the analogy and suggest that, although not every exegete need become a professional textual critic, every exegete must have sufficient involvement in that work to evaluate and assimilate the results of the "experts." Similarly, all biblical interpreters need exposure to and experience in lexicographic method if they would use the linguistic data in a responsible way.

In a survey of biblical scholars and students conducted in the late 1960s, some respondents commented on the need for "a better understanding of the nature, use, and limitations of a lexicon" on the part of dictionary users.<sup>58</sup> The point . . . is still valid today. This requisite understanding, however, can only be developed on the basis of a solid grasp of the theoretical foundations of lexicology.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>E. F. Miller, *The Influence of Gesenius on Hebrew Lexicography* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927; reprinted, New York: AMS, 1966) 49–50.

<sup>2</sup>See F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907); L. H. Köhler and W. Baumgartner, eds., *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (2d ed.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958); L. H. Köhler et al., *Hebräischen und aramäischen Lexikon zum Alten Testament* (3d ed.; 2 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967–); and W. L. Holladay, ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971; reprinted, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup>M. Silva, *Biblical Words & Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 31–32, citing J. E. Gates, *An Analysis of the Lexicographic Resources Used by American Biblical Scholars Today* (Missoula, Montana: SBLDS, 1972) 134.



The serious exegete of the Old Testament cannot rely on just one lexicon. A number of them have varying degrees of value for the student of Hebrew today. The most valuable are those which have been compiled within the context of modern Semitic philology; that is, the ones which were able to utilize Akkadian or, better yet, Akkadian and Ugaritic when the study of these languages reached a state of maturity. Because of its early date, the lexicon by Brown, Driver, and Briggs is sometimes inaccurate in its use of Akkadian.<sup>4</sup> Even at the present date the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary<sup>5</sup> (hereafter *CAD*) remains incomplete. Still, Brown-Driver-Briggs (or *BDB* by its popular acronym) preserves an updated version of Gesenius' lexicography. Köhler and Baumgartner's first lexicon, along with its supplement volume, offers the lexical description of Hebrew vocabulary that is heir to the fifty years of Semitic linguistic advances following *BDB*. Yet it cannot be followed blindly or uncritically in every application of Akkadian or Ugaritic.<sup>6</sup> Much has been learned in the quarter-century since they were published. The recently completed Hebrew portion (four vols.) of a new German Hebrew-Aramaic lexicon (edited initially by Köhler-Baumgartner and continued by Kutscher-Hartmann, et al.; see n. 2, p. 6) promises to be the most philologically complete and correct lexicon to date; but the rapid rate at which such data are presently being made available will eventually make any current lexicon somewhat outdated. This is especially true of the earlier volumes because of the large number of years involved in writing a Hebrew lexicon. The first

<sup>4</sup>This is not to indicate they erroneously used the information but that the data at hand was sometimes faulty by today's standards; that is, some of the Akkadian lexical data they consulted is now outdated. An example is the suggestion of ḥīlu as a cognate (s.v. ḥīl) to support the meaning "dance," to which *CAD* gives no related definition.

<sup>5</sup>I. J. Gelb et al., eds., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956-).

<sup>6</sup>L. Köhler, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* s.v. "zrb"; *CAD* s.v. "šarāpu"; Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon* s.v. "zrb"; and L. Köhler et al., *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon* s.v. "zrb." Even though this lexicon was published fifty years later than *BDB*, it is now over twenty years since its first edition; so its weaknesses must be seen in the same light as that of *BDB*. An example is its explanation of zrb, a hapax in Job 6:17, as meaning "to press" in light of the Akkadian cognate zurubu. Moré recently, however, the *CAD* has established the proper cognate as šarāpu, "to burn" (1961); and a decade later, Holladay's concise abridgement of the lexicon based on the editorship of Köhler and Baumgartner gave the meaning "dry up." However, the third edition of the Köhler-Baumgartner lexicon (later edited by E. Y. Kutscher and B. Hartmann et al.) arrived at the translation "scorch, burn" based on the Hebrew cognate šrb. Unlike the second edition, the Syriac and Akkadian zrb "to press" was questioned but shown to be a solution offered by some. Most modern English versions—the NEB a notable exception—have adopted an idea related to "a time of heat or burning"; cf. NIV, RSV, NASB, JB.

two volumes of this latest Old Testament lexicon begun by Köhler and Baumgartner appeared in print during a nineteen-year period (1967–86); while volumes three and four were published, respectively, in 1983 and 1990. William Holladay's abridged Hebrew lexicon (published in 1971) was able to make use of manuscript material for this third edition of Köhler-Baumgartner through the letter *samek*; but such a concise work in English cannot substitute fully for the parent German production. Where Holladay could not rely on published or unpublished portions of that lexical project (letters *ayin* through *taw*), the same advantages obviously were not inherited and thus not incorporated. A comprehensive, up-to-date Hebrew lexicon in English is still lacking among the existing and fully-published Old Testament Hebrew lexica. The student must ask: "What *lexica* should be owned?" No one lexicon is sufficient, or probably ever can be, for Hebrew exegesis. The careful student must, and the wise student will, consult a variety of the most complete and current lexica available.<sup>7</sup> Presently, the American student or scholar should at least consult the lexica by Gesenius-Tregelles; Brown, Driver, and Briggs; Holladay; and Köhler-Baumgartner.

<sup>7</sup>See J. Barr, "Hebrew Lexicography," and P. Fronzaroli, "Problems of a Semitic Etymological Dictionary" in *Studies on Semitic Lexicography* (Florence: Instituto di Linguistica e di Lingue Orientali, 1973) 1–24, 103–26, for a detailed examination and examples of the potential and problems of the latest lexica.

Also the reader should be made aware of other lexica in production, especially one in English which will replace BDB and has reported good progress since work began in September 1988. This lexicon, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, unlike previous works and as its name implies, will seek to incorporate all the biblical and extra-biblical remains of the Classical Hebrew language. The director and chief editor of the project is Professor David J. A. Clines, University of Sheffield, with co-editors J. W. Rogerson and P. R. Davies. Also unlike BDB and other older lexica, the words will appear in alphabetical order. A special feature is the inclusion of syntagmatic information. The project is being carried out under the auspices of the Society for Old Testament Studies.

Fascicles and the first volume of the third edition of Köhler-Baumgartner appeared in 1967. The lengthy production schedule created a further delay in that it became necessary to complete the project under the new general editorship of E. Y. Kutscher and B. Hartmann.

Other lexica underway include, most importantly, another remake (the eighteenth edition) of Gesenius' *Handwörterbuch*, of which the first volume, prepared by R. Meyer and H. Donner, has appeared. Two features will make this a very valuable addition to the field of Hebrew lexicography and set it apart from the other German and especially the English lexica discussed above. Even more than the aforementioned German work and in contradistinction to the "new BDB," in true Gesenius style this dictionary will contain an abundance of references to cognate Semitic languages and to scholarly word studies in bibliographic entries. Like the other German but unlike the latest and novel English approach, it remains strictly a dictionary of the remains of Classical Hebrew in the Old Testament; however, its treatment of the Ben Sira and Qumran materials is more extensive than that in any previously published Hebrew lexica. See D. J. A. Clines, editor, and

## THE TRANSLATIONS EVALUATED

As with the lexica the value of any translation of the Hebrew Old Testament is partly determined by the quality of the linguistic tools—in this case mainly the lexica themselves—used by the translators. Since accurate translation is dependent on sound exegesis, which in turn is dependent on the best lexica, what was generally noted about the linguistic and lexicographic climate of the periods of Hebrew lexicography applies to the potential of any versions produced within the same periods. The following will focus on a few representative OT translations of each period and suggest why extreme views regarding the priority of any one translation be abandoned.

*During the Preparatory Period (before A.D. 913)*

No known Hebrew lexicon was created during this era. Three major translation projects of the Hebrew Scriptures were: (1) the Greek version of ca. 250 B.C. (the *LXX*, or Septuagint); (2) the Syriac version of possibly A.D. 40–70 (the Peshiṭta); and (3) the Latin version of A.D. 390–405 (the Vulgate). Each of these clearly was written before any science of Hebrew linguistics or philology in the modern sense developed. On the other hand, they were composed at a time which possibly preserved lexical knowledge of Hebrew that was lost to later generations. The exact nature and value of these versions is a subject that is highly complex and technical and has been extensively debated. The concern here is merely to point out the apparent Semitic linguistic context in which their translators worked. In this case little is known specifically, but all these translations show that often the translators were not willing or able to render adequately the Hebrew text before them.<sup>8</sup> Yet these versions remain very valuable for exegesis because they sometimes preserve a reading preferable to that in the Masoretic text or proposed by a lexicon. As the examples that are charted at the end of the next major evaluative section (p. 14) would show in some instances when investigated as regards their translation history, sometimes an ancient version contains the rendering not followed by subsequent versions and lexicographers but recovered and substantiated by data from modern Semitic philology.

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J. W. Rogerson and P. R. Davies, co-editors, "The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew: Newsletter 1" (University of Sheffield, July 1988) 1–2, and Clines, "Newsletter 2" (December 1988) 1–2, for the basis of much of and further elaboration on the information contained in this endnote.

<sup>8</sup>See E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1979) 47–83; and S. P. Brock, "The Phenomenon of Biblical Translation in Antiquity" in *Studies in the Septuagint* (New York: KTAV, 1974) 541–71.

The Syriac Bible, or Peshiṭta, requires special consideration at this point in regard to a modern theory about its value. George M. Lamsa sought to popularize the view that the Syriac Bible represents the original language and idioms of biblical revelation, rather than Hebrew and Greek. In 1957 his English translation of the Peshiṭta<sup>9</sup> was published. His claim was that Aramaic was the more natural language of discourse for the biblical writers. However, the Aramaic they spoke was western Aramaic, whereas Syriac is eastern Aramaic. Syriac is not the Aramaic of the Old Testament. Besides, evidence of written or oral Aramaic originals of the Hebrew Bible is speculative. As indicated above, the Syriac Bible sometimes might contain the more original reading; but Lamsa has sought not to revise but to replace the Hebrew text with a much later Syriac text. Unless his presupposition is accepted, his novel renderings usually are unnecessary because the Hebrew is clear and contextually valid. He is often helpful with *hapax legomena* and other difficult words. As an example of the former, the Peshiṭta has “venom” where the Hebrew has “wine” in Deut 32:33; but the context favors the Hebrew meaning.

*During the Formative Period (A.D. 913–1810)*

During this initial stage of lexicographic growth, important translations appeared such as: (1) the Arabic version of ca. A.D. 1000; (2) the German version by Luther in ca. 1532; and (3) the Authorized, or King James, English Version of 1611. The theoretical common Semitic vocabulary stock available to the translators of the LXX, if it existed then, was a long-lost resource by the time of the Christian era. Christian Hebraists of the Middle Ages were dependent on Jewish tradition; and Arabic dominated comparative linguistics. Knowledge of the Hebrew language had waned among Christian scholars because of disinterest until the sixteenth century, when Jewish Hebraic studies declined.

Before 1500 the understanding of Hebrew was incomplete and at times incorrect on basic matters; but from 1500–1810—with the loss of Jewish scholarship leading the way—few advances were made. This state of Hebraic knowledge was reflected by the lexica and translations. The Old Testament was not translated as often as the New, and some translators were guided by literary as much as—possibly in a few cases more than—exegetical purposes. The versions of this period are not valuable as witnesses to the original text; but they are helpful in a supporting role, when a reading is suggested by stronger evidence.

<sup>9</sup>See G. M. Lamsa, *The Holy Bible: From Ancient Eastern Manuscripts* (16th ed.; Philadelphia: A. J. Holman, 1957) v–viii.

The translators of this period were greatly influenced by and dependent on former translations, especially the *LXX* and Vulgate and especially for rare and difficult Hebrew words. The Authorized Version is the outstanding example.

A number of comments are necessary concerning the Authorized Version (AV hereafter) in particular because of its long history of popularity and in light of a current problem stemming from an untenable claim about its value as a Bible version. Like all translators, the King James committee members were products of their lexicographic climate, which by today's standards and Semitic linguistic situation was severely limited. Many of the best English Hebraists of that day, however, were involved in the translation process. At the same time, their purpose should not be forgotten. In the "Address to the Reader"—left out of most modern printings of the AV—the translators stated their purpose and policies. They let it be known that their purpose was not "to make a new translation but a traditional one,"<sup>10</sup> that is, in the tradition of the Vulgate and previous English versions with which Europeans were familiar. So their purpose was more literary than linguistic. At the same time, their Semitic linguistic climate was limited, pre-scientific in the modern sense, and lacking the aids of modern philology. The reason the AV failed to put the great amount of OT poetry in poetic stanzas was that it was made more than a century before Lowth revealed the nature of Hebrew poetry. The translators may have sensed a little about the feature of parallelism in Hebrew, but their work shows it was not fully appreciated until after Lowth. As demonstrated by the chart on p. 18, the King James translators could not adequately deal with many *hapax legomena* because they lacked the advances in Semitic philology available now. Because such discoveries have been so late, the numerous lexical changes needed in the OT were much less noticeable. Thus new translations were rarely called for, and the AV remained popular for over three hundred years.

A current problem is that the AV has remained popular and is the most popular English version today because of its beauty and tradition in spite of its lack of accuracy and clarity. The same twentieth-century person who would never read a seventeenth-century book wants a seventeenth-century version of the Bible. Coupled with this is the current claim by many—of whom some have scholarly credentials—that the King James Version is the perfect written Word of God in English for all time. This has come in the period of Hebrew lexicography when the need for new translations and their constant revision is undeniable in light of the evidence from linguistic and philological study related to the biblical languages. No argument is being made against those who wish

<sup>10</sup>N. Frye, *The Great Code* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1982) xiii.

to follow the *Textus Receptus*,<sup>11</sup> but those who so choose must seek the best translation of that New Testament and the Masoretic text. In 1611 the AV was it, but not now.

### *During the Scientific Period (A.D. 1810–)*

The rest of this discussion of translations will focus on English Versions. As indicated, no great need was felt for new Bible translations until the modern years of Hebrew lexicography (1871–). Numerous English versions have appeared during the twentieth century; and as many philological advances have progressively occurred, so have the translations progressively improved as to the accuracy of solving lexical problems in the Old Testament. The more recent versions stand out in this area; but such changes have been incorporated very slowly and conservatively.

### *Choosing a Translation*

The use of data from Semitic philology affects the accuracy feature of good translation; however, the best translation must have beauty and clarity as well. Thus one should use a translation that has taken into account the most recent linguistic findings—not necessarily the most recent proposals, uncritically—and is readable, yet written in the best style its language offers for the age in which the translation is done. The reader is most interested in what the Bible says so he can interpret what it means; consequently, the lexical aspect is primary to the value of a translation. The best translations, however, are not those which have been

<sup>11</sup>Neither does the author accept the *Textus Receptus* as the most authentic representation of the original Greek New Testament text, but the issue concerns the choosing of the best English translation no matter which tradition of textual transmission is followed. Siding with the TR does not necessitate staying with the AV/KJV as the final word in translating the TR. Also this debate has no bearing on the OT text, where the Masoretic text is accepted by most translators as the primary textual witness to the original Hebrew Scriptures. Witnesses to other textual traditions (the Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Qumran documents—which latter recension reflects the two others named and the MT) are consulted for variant readings by all who employ the science of textual criticism; but those who believe the AV possesses a special sacred quality as an English version look to no other OT text than the MT as being fundamentally the “TR” of the Hebrew Bible. Thus they must deal with the same basic issue in relation to the OT as noted above with the NT, but without clouding the discussion by accusing their opponents of using the wrong Hebrew or OT text. Those who postulate the primacy of the AV of 1611 based on a preference for the TR must still explain the supposed supreme accuracy of that translation for the OT in light of an abundantly increasing accurate knowledge of Hebrew grammar and lexicography since that time, coming from the many comparatively recent developments and advances in Semitic linguistics and comparative and cognate studies.

influenced the most by Semitic comparative linguistics but those which have accepted the most certain results of the lexical light from cognate studies. An example of the former is *The Anchor Bible* commentary and translation, which frequently treats the Old Testament as more of a Ugaritic than a Hebrew document. An example of the latter is the *NIV*.

A translation should never be chosen on the basis of tradition alone. Accuracy is the foremost but not the only guide. The Bible reader finds differences in translations because of differences in perspective and knowledge when each was written. For example, the *AV* has "spider" in Prov 30:28 where the *NIV* has "lizard." Both may be, and one has to be, incorrect. Of the two, the *AV* was written long before the meaning of the Hebrew behind these renderings was answered by available evidence from linguistic discoveries.

As for the clarity of translations, the *AV* is full of words from the seventeenth century like "cockatrice" in Isa 59:5 ("vipers" in the *NIV*) and "reins" in Ps 139:13 (literally, "kidneys"; "inmost being" in the *NIV*), which almost no one who speaks modern English understands. The question "Which translation is best?" has the same problem as the similar query with the lexica. No serious Bible student can limit himself to just one translation for study. No perfect translation exists; they all have a number of strengths and weaknesses. The *AV* excels in the beauty of classical English prose; and even extreme renderings—those that abuse, refuse, or are unable to use data from Semitic philology—need to be consulted at times. In light of the criteria established above, the most important English Old Testament versions are the Jerusalem Bible, New English Bible, New American Bible, and the New International Version. Those which should be regularly consulted for study are, at least, the ones just mentioned plus the Septuagint, Vulgate, New American Standard Bible, Revised (or New Revised) Standard Version, *The Anchor Bible Commentary*, and the Berkeley Translation. The average English Bible reader who has an Authorized (King James) Version should at least obtain a New International (or some modern version) and a New King James Version.

#### THE LANGUAGE EVALUATED

Semitic languages originated before the periods of Old Testament Hebrew lexicography began. The value of one of these languages or dialects for clarifying an obscure word or passage in Hebrew is determined by its affinity with the Hebrew language. Ugaritic, therefore, has become very important to OT scholars because both it and Hebrew reflect the speech of Canaan. The value of the Semitic languages for OT study is a topic of much technical debate. Such cannot be reviewed

in full here, nor can each language be described and critiqued in detail. The reader is referred to the relevant literature,<sup>12</sup> of which some of the more important titles are named in the note just indicated.

### *Assessing their Collective Value*

A statement by Edward Ullendorff will suffice to support this writer's position and present purposes:

Hebrew is a Semitic language. This trite statement implies that many aspects of Hebrew can be properly evaluated only against the background of the *ensemble* of Semitics. The principal Semitic languages include Akkadian . . . in Mesopotamia, Ugaritic, Amorite, Phoenician . . . Hebrew-Moabite, and Aramaic in the . . . [Syrian and Palestinian] area, Arabic and South-Arabian in central and south-west Arabia, and Ethiopic in the horn of Africa. The closeness and relationship of the classical Semitic languages to each other and their essential unity (this would not be true of the developed forms of many modern Semitic tongues) had been recognized by Muslim and Jewish grammarians as early as the tenth century.<sup>13</sup>

### *Assessing their Individual Value*

Unfortunately, the lexicographers of the Middle Ages were unaware of the most ancient Semitic linguistic data which are available today; but each of the languages has the potential of solving a lexical problem that none of the others can. All are indispensable, but some (Akkadian and Ugaritic) are more reliable and frequently employed because of their extensive materials and closer historical and linguistic relationship to Hebrew. At one time or another the value of these for an improved translation of the Old Testament has been extremely exaggerated. Like Arabic and Akkadian before it, a pan-Ugaritic school of thought is in vogue now among the disciples of Mitchell Dahood, who have taken Hebrew-Ugaritic philology to the extreme of treating Hebrew as if it were Ugaritic. Dahood popularized Ugaritology by re-writing Hebrew linguistics in terms of Ugaritic grammar and lexicography. Scholarship is correct to reject this extreme; but sometimes the extremist uncovers things no one with a conservative approach is likely to see. Where the Hebrew text is clear and contextually valid, unless other factors dictate it, the exegete need not resort to parallel passages and etymological cognates with different meanings in

<sup>12</sup>See E. Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982) 46–53; E. Ullendorff, "Old Testament Languages" in *Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977) 29–35; and Fronzaroli, *Studies on Semitic Lexicography* 1–, among a multitude of similar studies which vary widely in value.

<sup>13</sup>Ullendorff, "Old Testament Languages" 31.



the other Semitic languages. Dahood and his followers have abused Ugaritic in this manner.

Cultural backgrounds and a number of lexical and grammatical problems in the Hebrew Bible, however, are indebted solely to the discoveries at Ugarit for their illumination. Hebrew is not to be equated with Ugaritic or any other Semitic tongue, but neither was the Old Testament written in a literary vacuum. The ancient Semitic languages and dialects together offer the possibility of filling the gaps left in the present understanding of Hebrew.

### *Assessing their Practical Value*

The serious student of Hebrew need not master all the Semitic languages, but he must at least be able to interact critically with the philological literature—this means the lexica if nothing else—related to his efforts at Old Testament exegesis. Accordingly, an introduction to comparative Semitics should be required of all seminary students. In addition to Hebrew and Aramaic, anyone who wishes to interpret and translate the Hebrew Old Testament should at least be familiar with the language and literature of Ugarit.

### *Using the Semitic Cognate Lexical Data: Examples of their Translational Value*

The following chart provides examples of OT Hebrew words whose traditional translations have been confirmed or changed as a result of comparisons with cognate Semitic lexical data. The new renderings are not universally accepted, especially among evangelical exegetes; but their existence in the conservative *NIV* demonstrates they are clear instances where the translators are convinced that the context and linguistic evidence are best served by relying on the usage of cognate roots in Arabic, Akkadian, and Ugaritic, especially, among other Semitic languages.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>A question mark (?) in the chart means that it is not clear how that version (either AV or NIV) so marked handled the translation of the Hebrew term in question.

The triradicals ḥkr, šṭʿ, and škh were new roots proposed and substantiated by their contexts and cognate data for inclusion in OT Hebrew vocabulary. The meaning preserved by Ugaritic for the latter term has been accepted by recent lexica, but its form remains entered as škh. The terms dy, ʿrb, and br were proposed homographs of otherwise well-known terms. At least one modern lexicon has added another root, ʿrb, for “clouds.” Recent lexica have recognized a new homographic term: br, “field,” in Biblical Hebrew. As yet dy has not been included in the lexica published and available to this writer (see chart on p. 14) as a newly discovered Hebrew homograph; but its meaning supported by an Arabic cognate has influenced some English translators. The remaining roots were never debated as to the need for emendation. Their radicals are clear; but their usage has been difficult to determine, since each is either a hapax (all but two of them) or a word

Hebrew Term Transliterated	Semitic Cognate and Lexical Solution	AV	NIV
<i>dy</i>	Arabic <i>dwy</i> , "noise"	?	"blast"
<i>šph</i>	Arabic <i>safʿa</i> , "sweep bare"	"high place"	"bare hill"
<i>ḥkr</i>	Arabic <i>ḥakara</i> , "to wrong someone"	"make strange"	"attack"
<i>zrb</i>	Akkadian <i>šarāpu</i> , "to burn"	"wax warm"	?
<i>brm</i>	Akkadian <i>birnu</i> , "multicolored trim"	"rich"	"multi-colored rugs"
<i>klp</i>	Akkadian <i>kalappu</i> , "ax"	"hammers"	"axes"
<i>štʿ</i>	Ugaritic <i>tʿ</i> , "fear"	"dismayed"	"dismayed"
<i>ʿrb</i>	Ugaritic <i>ʿrp</i>	"heavens"	"clouds"
<i>škh</i>	Ugaritic <i>tkh</i> , "ship"	"pictures"	"vessel"
<i>br</i>	Aramaic <i>br</i> , "field"	"corn"	"wilds"
<i>gbʷ</i>	Ethiopic <i>gbʷ</i> , "to gather (water)"	"pit"	"cistern"

## CONCLUSION

In summary fashion this paper provided a linguistic basis for evaluating and selecting lexica and Bible translations for personal use. The developmental periods of Hebrew lexicography and corresponding advances in Semitic languages were employed as a framework for this evaluative overview. In addition Semitic philology itself was assessed as to its practicality and necessity. It was demonstrated that the most recent OT lexica and versions are generally the most accurate tools. Comparative Semitic studies were shown to be a necessary pursuit for the exegete to be able to use the best linguistic tools and produce the most reliable interpretations and translations.

appearing very infrequently in the OT. These are instances where new meanings were established for familiar roots when the appropriate Semitic comparative lexical data became available. Most modern English versions recently published and the most recent Hebrew lexica have accepted the translations of these terms substantiated and preserved by Arabic, Akkadian, and/or Ethiopic. Readers unaware should note that among Semitic phonemes, Hebrew š and Arabic s, Hebrew z and Akkadian ṣ, and Hebrew š and Ugaritic t are interchangeable consonants.

APPENDIX  
TIME-LINE OF HIGHLIGHTS IN LEXICOGRAPHIC AND  
LINGUISTIC HISTORY<sup>15</sup>

<i>Dates BC/AD</i>	<i>Lexicographic History</i>	<i>Linguistic History</i>
THE PREPARATORY PERIOD OF ANCIENT LEXICOGRAPHY (BEFORE A.D. 913)		
ca. 3100–450	Sumerian, Eblaite, Akkadian, Hittite, and Persian word lists	
ca. 1500–425		Recording of OT Hebrew language
ca. 458–323		First Aramaic OT paraphrases ( <i>Targums</i> )
ca. 250		Septuagint Pentateuch (Greek OT version)
ca. 10 BC		First Latin dictionary
AD		
ca. 40–70		Syriac OT
ca. 130–70		other Greek versions of the OT
ca. 180–430	First major advances in Greek lexicography	
ca. 150–400		Old Latin versions
ca. 250–500		Coptic, Ethiopic versions
ca. 386–405		Jerome's Latin Vulgate
700s	Beginning of Arabic lexical analysis	First Arabic grammars and Bible versions
ca. 875–900	Paltoi's Talmudic lexicon	
THE FORMATIVE PERIOD OF HEBREW LEXICOGRAPHY (A.D. 913–1810) <i>The Jewish Era (913–1550)</i>		
ca. 913	First-known Hebrew lexicon (Saadiah Gaon)	
ca. 945–1010		Triliteral root theory established
1040s	First complete lexical and grammatical descriptions of Hebrew (Jonah ibn Janach)	

<sup>15</sup>See W. C. Marlowe, "The Development of Old Testament Hebrew Lexicography" (Dissertation: Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985) for a more complete and comprehensive chronological survey and chart of the highlights in the growth of the OT lexicon in light of Semitic lexicographic and linguistic history.

<i>Dates AD</i>	<i>Lexicographic History</i>	<i>Linguistic History</i>
ca. 1080–1100		First monograph on Hebrew homonyms (Judah ibn Bal'am)
ca. 1150–1250	Centers of Judaism shift from Arabic to Christian environment	
ca. 1200		Complete description of OT Hebrew with Arabic references (David Kimchi)

End of the “Golden Era” of Hebrew medieval philology

ca. 1270–90	First dictionary of OT synonyms (Isaac Bedersi)	
ca. 1437–45		First Hebrew concordance
ca. 1450		Printing press invented
1488		First printed Hebrew Bible
ca. 1500–50	The lead in Hebrew studies shifts from Jewish to Christian hands almost exclusively	
1506/1523	First Hebrew lexicon by a Christian (J. Reuchlin)	Latin linguistics begin to be applied to Hebrew
ca. 1532		Martin Luther's German translation of Bible

*The Christian Era (1550–1810)*

1607	J. Buxtorf's Hebrew lexicon	
1611		The Authorized, or King James, English version
1612	First lexicon by a Christian to compare Hebrew with other Semitic languages (V. Schindler)	
1750	Hebrew established as one of many Semitic languages and Hebrew-Arabic studies placed on a scientific basis (A. Schultens)	
1752/1753	J. Simonis' OT lexicon	R. Lowth's work reminding western scholars of the true nature of Hebrew poetry (parallelism)
1799		Rosetta Stone found

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*THE SCIENTIFIC PERIOD OF HEBREW LEXICOGRAPHY (A.D. 1810–)*  
*The Classical years (1810–71)*

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<i>Dates AD</i>	<i>Lexicographic History</i>	<i>Linguistic History</i>
1810–34	Gesenius' lexical and grammatical contributions to OT Hebrew and Semitic philology	
1820–22		Egyptian deciphered
1836–55	Robinson's translation of Gesenius' manual Hebrew lexicon into English	
1837–50		Akkadian deciphered Sumerian discovered
1846–57	Tregelles' translation of Gesenius' 1833 manual lexicon into English	
1868		Moabite discovered
The Modern years (1871–)		
1871	Davies' Hebrew lexicon uses Akkadian lexical data	
1872–99		Gilgamesh Epic translated
1879–1901	Syriac thesaurus published	
1880		Siloam inscription discovered
1886–1903	Jastrow's Targumic lexicon	
1887		Tell el-Amarna letters discovered
1896	Delitzsch's Assyrian handbook	
1901		Hammurabi's code found
1906–7		Hittite library found
1906	Brown, Driver, and Briggs' Hebrew lexicon of the OT	Elephantine papyri found
1907	Dillmann's Ethiopic lexicon	
1920s–30s		Nuzi tablets excavated
1929–30		Ugaritic deciphered
1933/1935		Mari tablets and Lachish letters discovered
1937		Mandelkern's OT Hebrew concordance
1947–65		Three editions of Gordon's Ugaritic handbook
1953	Köhler-Baumgartner's Hebrew lexicon adds Ugaritic data	
1956–	The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary	
1956		Young's Ugaritic concordance

1958	Second edition of Köhler-Baumgartner's Hebrew lexicon	Lisowsky's OT Hebrew concordance
1959–	Von Soden's Akkadian handbook	
1963		Herdner's corpus of Ugaritic texts
1964–		Excavations at Ebla
1967–	Work begun on the third edition of Köhler-Baumgartner's OT Hebrew lexicon (vol. 1)	
1967	Aistleitner's Ugaritic dictionary	
1968–		Eblaite deciphered
1971	Holladay's English and abridged lexicon based on Köhler-Baumgartner (3rd ed.)	
1974–83	Vols. 2–3, third ed. of Köhler-Baumgartner's OT Hebrew lexicon completed	
1988–	Work begun on The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew (ed. Clines)	
	18th edition of Gesenius' Handwörterbuch (ed. Meyer and Donner; vol. 1)	
1989/90–	Available: one vol. Gesenius (18th); three vols. Köhler-Baumgartner (3rd)	Murtonen's Hebrew in its West Semitic Setting, 3 vols.
1990/91	Third edition of Köhler-Baumgartner's OT Hebrew lexicon completed (vol. 4; Aramaic portion, vol. 5, wanting) Part one (Aleph) of The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew (ed. Clines) completed.	

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# INSPIRATION, PRESERVATION, AND NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

DANIEL B. WALLACE\*

## INTRODUCTION

THE Bible has always been of central importance to evangelicals. It not only defines what we are to believe; it also tells us how we are to behave. A clear and faithful exposition of the scriptures has, historically, been at the heart of any relevant pastoral ministry. In order for a particular passage to be applied legitimately, it must first be understood accurately. Before we ask “How does this text apply to me?” we must ask “What does this text mean?” And even before we ask “What does this text mean?” we must first ask, “What does this text say?” Determining what a text says is what textual criticism is all about. In other words, textual criticism, as its prime objective, seeks to ascertain the very wording of the original. This is necessary to do with the books of the Bible—as with all literary documents of the ancient world—because the originals are no longer extant. Not only this, but of the more than five thousand manuscript copies of the Greek New Testament no two of them agree completely. It is essential, therefore, that anyone who expounds the Word of God be acquainted to some degree with the science of textual criticism, if he or she is to expound that Word faithfully.

The relevance of textual criticism, however, is not shut up only to those who have acquaintance with Greek, nor only to those in explicitly expository ministries. Textual criticism is relevant to every Christian, precisely because many of the textual differences in Greek can be translated into another language. Thus the differences between the New

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Testament of the King James Version, for example, and that of the New American Standard Version are not just differences in the English; there are also differences in the Greek text behind the English—in fact, over 5,000 differences! And with the publication of the New King James New Testament in 1979<sup>1</sup> (in which the KJV was rendered in modern English), the translational differences are diminished while the textual differences are heightened. The average modern American Christian who lacks the requisite educational background to read Elizabethan English now has no excuse for not reading the (new) King James Version. In light of the heavy promotion by Thomas Nelson Publishers,<sup>2</sup> that oft-asked question, “What is the most accurate New Testament?,” is increasingly a question about a version’s textual basis as much as it is of the translational philosophy behind it.

What is the textual difference, then, between the (new) KJV NT and other modern translations? In a nutshell, most modern translations are based on a few ancient manuscripts, while the (new) KJV NT is based on a printed edition of the Greek New Testament (called the *Textus Receptus* or TR) which, in turn, was derived from the majority of medieval manuscripts (known collectively as the majority text [MT] or Byzantine text). In one respect, then, the answer to the question “What is the most accurate New Testament?” turns on the question, “Which manuscripts are closest to the original—the few early ones or the many late ones?”

In this paper it is not my objective to answer that question.<sup>3</sup> Rather, I wish to address an argument that has been used by TR/MT advocates—an argument which is especially persuasive among laymen. The argument is unashamedly theological in nature: inspiration and preservation are intrinsically linked to one another and both are intrinsically linked to the TR/MT. That is to say, the doctrine of verbal-plenary inspiration necessitates the doctrine of providential preservation of the text, and the doctrine of providential preservation necessarily implies that the majority text (or the TR)<sup>4</sup> is *the* faithful

<sup>1</sup>*The New King James Bible, New Testament* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979).

<sup>2</sup>One of the promotional means of the publisher is the sponsoring of concerts. On July 18, 1988, I attended one of these concerts at Reunion Arena in Dallas, Texas, where approximately 18,000 people were in attendance. At the end of the concert, Dr. Arthur L. Farstad, editor of the NKJV, promoted this Bible. His chief “sales pitch” was text-critical in which he argued that Mark 16:9–20 was authentic and that modern translations, by deleting it (or at least by casting doubts on its authenticity), delete Christ’s resurrection from Mark’s gospel. His statement, however, was not altogether accurate, for although there is no resurrection appearance by Christ if the gospel ends at v 8, there is still a resurrection! Whether intentional or not, the impression left on the audience was that the NKJV is a more orthodox translation than other modern versions.

<sup>3</sup>For a discussion of this, see my article, “The Majority Text and the Original Text: Are They Identical?,” *BSac* 148 (1991) 151–69.

<sup>4</sup>This statement is not meant to imply that MT = TR, but that within this school of thought are two divisions—those who hold that the printed edition of Erasmus (TR) is



replica of the autographs. Inspiration (and inerrancy) is also used for the Byzantine text's correctness in two other ways: (1) only in the Byzantine text do we have an inerrant New Testament; (2) if any portion of the New Testament is lost (no matter how small, even if only one word), then verbal-plenary inspiration is thereby falsified.

If inspiration and preservation can legitimately be linked to the text of the New Testament in this way, then the (new) KJV NT is the most accurate translation and those who engage in an expository ministry should use this text alone and encourage their audiences to do the same. But if this theological argument is not legitimate, then New Testament textual criticism needs to be approached on other than a theological *a priori* basis. And if so, then perhaps most modern translations do indeed have a more accurate textual basis after all.

Our approach will be to deal first with the arguments from preservation, then to deal with the arguments related more directly to inspiration and inerrancy.<sup>5</sup>

#### I. PRESERVATION

##### A. *The Statement*

On a popular level, the TR-advocating and "King James only" fundamentalist pamphleteers have waged a holy war on all who would use any modern version of the New Testament, or any Greek text based on the few ancient manuscripts rather than on the many late ones.<sup>6</sup> Jasper James Ray is a highly influential representative of this approach.<sup>7</sup> In his

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the original and those who hold that the reading of the majority of extant Greek witnesses is the original.

<sup>5</sup>This breakdown is somewhat artificial, since the arguments from inspiration and inerrancy are closely tied to preservation as well. However, our organization is due chiefly to the fact that the arguments from preservation are more traditional and universal among TR/MT advocates, while the arguments from inspiration/inerrancy are of more recent vintage and are more idiosyncratic.

<sup>6</sup>In passing, Peter Ruckman could be mentioned as the most extreme "King James only" advocate, going so far as to argue that even the Greek and Hebrew text need to be corrected by the KJV! Cf. his *The Christian's Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* (Pensacola: Pensacola Bible Institute, 1970) 115–38; *Problem Texts* (Pensacola: Pensacola Bible Institute, 1980) 46–48.

<sup>7</sup>Not only has he influenced many laymen, but David Otis Fuller dedicated the book, *Counterfeit or Genuine[: Mark 16? John 8?]*, of which he was the editor (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1978), to "Jasper James Ray, Missionary Scholar of Junction City, Oregon, whose book, *God Wrote Only One Bible*, moved me to begin this fascinating faith-inspiring study" (p. v). Further, even Zane C. Hodges, formerly professor of NT at Dallas Theological Seminary, and arguably the prime mover in the modern revival of the "Traditional Text," "admits that it was the reading of Ray which began his investigation of textual criticism" (David D. Shields, "Recent Attempts to Defend the Byzantine Text of the Greek New Testament" [Ph.D.

book, *God Wrote Only One Bible*,<sup>8</sup> Ray says that no modern version may properly be called the Bible,<sup>9</sup> that salvation and spiritual growth can only come through versions based on the TR,<sup>10</sup> and that Satan is the prime mover behind all versions based on the more ancient manuscripts.<sup>11</sup> If Ray's view is correct, then those who use modern translations or a Greek New Testament based on the few ancient manuscripts are, at best, dupes of the devil and, at worst, in danger of forfeiting their immortal souls.

Ray's chief argument on behalf of the TR is based on preservation. In the following statements, notice how closely inspiration and preservation are linked—and how both are linked to the Textus Receptus.

dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; December, 1985] 26. This is based on an interview Shields had with Hodges on January 15, 1985).

<sup>8</sup>Junction City, OR: Eye Opener Publishers, 1955.

<sup>9</sup>"A multiplicity of differing Bible versions are in circulation today, resulting in a state of bewildering confusion. Some versions omit words, verses, phrases, and even chapter portions. . . . Among these [versions] you'll not find the Bible God gave when holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit . . ." (ibid., 1).

<sup>10</sup>The following are representative statements: "... the TEXTUS RECEPTUS . . . is God's sure foundation on which to rest our eternal salvation" (32). "It is impossible to be saved without 'FAITH,' and perfect-saving-faith can only be produced by the 'ONE' Bible God wrote, and that we find only in translations which agree with the Greek Textus Receptus refused by Westcott and Hort" (122). "Put poison anywhere in the blood stream and the whole becomes poisoned. Just so with the Word of God. When words are added or subtracted, Bible inspiration is destroyed, and the spiritual blood stream is poisoned. In this respect the revised Bibles in our day seem to have become spiritual guinea pigs [*sic*], with multiple hypodermic shots-in-the-arm by so called Doctors of Divinity, who have used the serum of scholasticism well mixed with modern free-thinking textual criticism. When the Bible words are tampered with, and substitution is made, the Bible becomes a dead thing with neither power to give or sustain life. Of course, even under these conditions, it is possible to build up church membership, and report many professions. But what about regeneration? Are they born again? No person can be born again without the Holy Spirit, and it is evident the Holy Spirit is not going to use a poisoned blood stream to produce healthy christians. Therefore, beware, beware, lest your faith become marred through the reading of corrupted Revised Versions of the Bible" (9).

<sup>11</sup>In his introduction, Ray states that he "knows that the teaching of this book, regarding Textual Criticism, goes contrary to what is being taught in almost every college, seminary, and Bible school. . . . The reader may say, 'How can so many good, sincere educated people be wrong?' Herein lies the 'mystery of iniquity' (2 Thess. 2:7)" (ii). Later he argues: "Many of these men [who use modern versions] are true servants of the Lord, and we should, with patience and love, try to reveal the truth to them. They have been 'brain-washed' by their teachers; who were 'brain-washed' by other teachers in a 'chain-reaction' on back to Westcott and Hort who, in 1881, 'switched' most of our seminaries and Bible schools from the dependable TEXTUS RECEPTUS to inferior manuscripts, such as codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. Of course this 'chain-reaction' could be traced on back to its beginning in Genesis 3:1, where (Satan) the serpent said unto the woman, 'Yea, hath God said?' In the humanistic theology of today we would hear something like this: 'These words are not in the best manuscripts'" (101).

Ray says, for example, that "the Textus Receptus . . . was given by the inspiration of God, and has been providentially preserved for us today."<sup>12</sup> He further adds that "the writing of the Word of God by inspiration is no greater miracle than the miracle of its preservation in the Textus Receptus."<sup>13</sup> Preservation, then, for Jasper James Ray, takes place on the same level as inspiration—i.e., extending to the very words.<sup>14</sup>

Even in works which are dressed in more scholarly garb, this theological presupposition (along with the witch-hunting invectives<sup>15</sup>) is still present. David Otis Fuller, for example, has edited several volumes in which professors and Bible scholars have contributed—all for

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 102.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 104.

<sup>14</sup>Further, inspiration and preservation are linked to tradition—especially the tradition of the English Bible, for Ray argues: "The Bible God wrote has been providentially preserved for us in the Greek Textus Receptus, from which the King James Bible was translated in 1611. Any version of the Bible that does not agree with this text, is certainly founded upon corrupted manuscripts" (ibid., 106).

<sup>15</sup>David Otis Fuller, for example, in *Counterfeit or Genuine*, speaks of "bastard Bibles" (10) and echoes J. J. Ray in condemning virtually all evangelical institutes of higher learning for using other than the *Textus Receptus* or the King James Version: "This is a David and Goliath battle with practically all of the evangelical seminaries and colleges, Bible institutes, and Bible schools slavishly following essentially the Westcott and Hort Greek Text and the Westcott and Hort theory, both of which are fallacious in every particular" (12). He adds further, as did Ray, that Satan is the mastermind behind this defection from the King James and TR: "born-again Christians in this twentieth century are facing the most malicious and vicious attack upon God's inspired Holy Word since the Garden of Eden. And this attack began in its modern form in the publication of the Revised Version of the Scriptures in 1881 in England" (9).

Donald A. Waite, a Dallas Seminary graduate, argues in his *The Theological Heresies of Westcott and Hort* (Collingswood, NJ: Bible for Today, 1979), that the two Cambridge dons were unregenerate, unsaved, apostate, and heretical (39–42). David D. Shields in his dissertation on "Recent Attempts to Defend the Byzantine Text of the Greek New Testament," points out that "the evidence on which [Waite] bases these conclusions often would indict most evangelical Christians. Even in the author's perspective, Westcott and Hort have theological problems, but the extreme severity of Waite's approach would declare anyone apostate and heretical who does not hold to his line" (55).

Wilbur Pickering, another alumnus of Dallas Seminary, and the president of the Majority Text Society, although normally not as prone as many others to such language, does sometimes imbibe in vitriolic speech. For example, in his master's thesis, "An Evaluation of the Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism" (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1968), he declares that the most ancient manuscripts came from a "sewer pipe" (93). In his book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977)—a book which has become the standard text in support of the majority text—Pickering states, for example, that "Aleph and B have lied" and that "Aleph is clearly a bigger liar than B" (126), and that all the ancient manuscripts on which modern critical texts are based are "convicted liars all" (135). Pickering has toned down his language in his second edition (1980), perhaps due to book reviews such as R. A. Taylor's in *JETS* 20 (1977) 377–81, in which such "emotionally-loaded language" is seen as clouding the issue (379). (In this second edition he says that "Aleph

the purpose of proving that the TR or MT is the best Greek New Testament. In *Which Bible?* he declares:

Naturalistic New Testament critics seem at last to have reached the end of the trail. Westcott and Hort's broad highway, which appeared to lead so quickly and smoothly to the original New Testament text, has dwindled down to a narrow foot path and terminated finally in a thicket of trees. For those who have followed it, there is only one thing to do, and that is to go back and begin the journey all over again from the consistently Christian starting point; namely, the divine inspiration and providential preservation of Scripture.<sup>16</sup>

The sequel to *Which Bible?*, entitled *True or False?*, is "DEDICATED TO All lovers of the Book; who believe in the Verbal, Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures; and who, of necessity [,] *must believe* in the Providential Preservation of the Scriptures through the centuries; and who hold that the Textus Receptus (Traditional Text) is nearest to the Original Manuscripts."<sup>17</sup>

This theological refrain—the linking of inspiration to preservation, and both to the majority text—got its major impetus from John William Burgon. Burgon, a high Church Anglican, Dean of Chichester, toward the end of the nineteenth century was both prolific and vituperative in his attacks against Westcott and Hort (the Cambridge scholars who produced the Greek text which stands, more or less, behind all modern

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and B have . . . mistakes, . . . Aleph is clearly worse than B" [135], and the ancient manuscripts are "blind guides all" [145].)

Theodore P. Letis, editor of *The Majority Text: Essays and Reviews in the Continuing Debate* (Fort Wayne, IN: Institute for Biblical Textual Studies, 1987), seems to use fulminatory language against everybody, for he is in something of a theological no man's land: his volleys are directed not only at modern textual criticism, but also at *majority text* advocates (since he advocates the TR)—and even against inerrantists! He speaks, for example, of "the idolatrous affair that evangelicals are having with the red herring of inerrancy" (22); those who advocate using modern-language Bibles (including the translators of the New King James Version) are "in pragmatic league with the goddess of modernity—Her Majesty, Vicissitude" (81); virtually all modern translations imbibe in Arianism (203); *ad hominem* arguments are everywhere to be found in his book.

<sup>16</sup>*Which Bible?*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975) 8–9.

<sup>17</sup>*True or False? The Westcott-Hort Textual Theory Examined*, ed. D. O. Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1973) 5. This linking of inspiration and preservation is also seen most clearly in Fuller's statement that "The Scriptures make it quite clear that He [God] is also well able to insure the providential preservation of His own Word through the ages, and that He is the Author and Preserver of the Divine Revelation. The Bible cannot be accounted for in any other way. It claims to be 'Theopneustos,' 'God-breathed' (II Timothy 3:16)" (*Which Bible?*, 5). It is significant that Fuller gives no proof-text for preservation here, for to him if the Bible is inspired it must be providentially preserved.

translations). There is no question that Burgon is the most influential writer on behalf of the TR—indeed, that he is the father of the majority text movement—for he is quoted with extreme approbation by virtually every TR/MT advocate.<sup>18</sup> He argued that “there exists no reason for supposing that the Divine Agent, who in the first instance thus gave to mankind the Scriptures of Truth, straightway abdicated His office; took no further care of His work; abandoned those precious writings to their fate.”<sup>19</sup>

Wilbur Pickering, president of the Majority Text Society, has continued this type of argument into the present debate. In his 1968 master’s thesis done at Dallas Seminary (“An Evaluation of the Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism”) he argued that this doctrine is “most important” and “what one believes does make a difference.”<sup>20</sup> Further, he linked the two together in such a way that a denial of one necessarily entails a denial of the other: “the doctrine of Divine Preservation of the New Testament Text depends upon the interpretation of the evidence which recognizes the Traditional Text to be the continuation of the autographa.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, Pickering seems to be saying: “if we reject the majority text view, we reject the doctrine of preservation.”<sup>22</sup>

E. F. Hills, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on NT textual criticism at Harvard Divinity School, argued:

If the doctrine of the Divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament scriptures is a true doctrine, the doctrine of providential preservation of the scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control over the

<sup>18</sup>In Shields’ dissertation (“Recent Attempts”), the first three chapters are entitled “The Popular Defenders of the Textus Receptus,” “The Scholarly Defenders of the Textus Receptus,” and “The Defenders of the Majority Text.” In each chapter there is a section (or two) on Burgon and the impetus he provided for the various groups (there is even a Dean Burgon Society which quite explicitly promotes his views). One may, with some justification, feel that very little new has been said by MT/TR advocates after Burgon.

<sup>19</sup>J. W. Burgon, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established* (arranged, completed, and edited by E. Miller; London: George Bell and Sons, 1896) 12.

<sup>20</sup>Pickering, “An Evaluation of the Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism,” 86.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>22</sup>More recently, Pickering has linked inspiration and preservation so closely that he argued that a denial of one was a denial of the other: “Are we to say that God was unable to protect the text of Mark or that He just couldn’t be bothered? I see no other alternative—either He didn’t care or He was helpless. And either option is fatal to the claim that Mark’s Gospel is ‘God-breathed’” (“Mark 16:9–20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration” [a paper circulated to members of the Majority Text Society, September, 1988] 1).

copying of the scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to God's people in every age.<sup>23</sup>

Hills adds that "all orthodox Christians, all Christians who show due regard for the Divine inspiration and providential preservation of Scripture, must agree with Burgon on this matter."<sup>24</sup>

These writers are just the tip of the iceberg. Indeed, so universal is the doctrinal underpinning of preservation found among MT/TR advocates that Bart Ehrman could say:

One cannot read the literature produced by the various advocates of the Majority text without being impressed by a remarkable theological concurrence. To one degree or another, they all (to my knowledge, without exception) affirm that God's inspiration of an inerrant Bible required His preservation of its text.<sup>25</sup>

And even Theo Letis, a TR advocate himself, flatly states, "The only reason that the Majority Text proponents even argue for the Byzantine text is because theologically they have both a verbal view of inspiration—and as a hidden agenda an unexpressed (at least as part of their present method) belief in providential preservation."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup>E. F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended!* (4th ed.; Des Moines: Christian Research, 1984) 2.

<sup>24</sup>"The Magnificent Burgon," in *Which Bible?*, 90.

<sup>25</sup>Bart D. Ehrman, "New Testament Textual Criticism: Quest for Methodology" (M.Div. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1981) 40. Shields echoes the same viewpoint in his dissertation ("Recent Attempts") where in each of his first three chapters in which he interacts with various proponents of MT/TR, there is extensive material on "theological perspective," including inspiration and providential preservation. He summarizes that "the strong theological basis from which all advocates for primacy [of the Byzantine text-type] argue is a poor starting-point for determining the text of the New Testament and creates a history of the text which contradicts known facts" (p. 3 of abstract). Since Ehrman wrote his thesis and Shields his dissertation, Theo Letis has altered this picture to some degree: he is the first member of the MT/TR school (as far as I am aware) who, though affirming providential preservation, denies inerrancy (see n. 15).

<sup>26</sup>Letis, *Continuing Debate*, 9. One might argue that Zane Hodges does not have such an agenda and that therefore he is an exception to the rule. At one point, in fact, Hodges himself seems to say this. In his interaction with Gordon Fee over this issue, Hodges states: "To speak of 'all modern advocates of the TR' as having a 'hidden agenda' is an impermissible *argumentum ad hominem*. It also is not true. I, for one, would be quite happy to accept the Westcott-Hort text as it stands if I thought that the grounds on which it rested were adequate. . . . My agenda at least—and I speak here only for myself—is precisely what I have expressed it to be—namely, a call to re-examine the claims of the majority text in the light of increasingly perceived deficiencies of the theory that underlies today's editions. I happen to think that a man's theology *can* affect his textual theories, but I am perfectly willing to entertain sensible arguments from any

To sum up: on a lay level, as well as on a pseudo-scholarly level, and even on a scholarly level, inspiration, preservation and the TR/MT are linked intrinsically. According to Byzantine text advocates, you cannot have one without the other.

## B. The Critique

There are a number of serious problems with the theological premise of Byzantine text advocates. Generally speaking, however, they all fall into one of three groups: (1) a question-begging approach, (2) faulty assumptions, and (3) a non-biblical doctrinal basis. As will be readily seen, there is a great deal of overlap between these three areas.

### 1. Question-Begging Approach

Majority text proponents beg the question for their view on at least three fronts.

*a. What do you count?* First, they only count Greek manuscripts. Yet, there are almost twice as many Latin NT manuscripts as there are Greek (over 10,000 to approximately 5,500). If the Latin

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quarter no matter what theology they may be associated with" ("Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Response," *JETS* 21 [1978] 145–46).

As Ehrman points out, however, there are two objections to Hodges' alleged neutral stance: (1) "While Hodges is right that some theological presuppositions may have no effect on one's approach toward textual criticism, it is equally clear that others certainly will. If one affirms as a theological 'given' that God would not allow a corrupted form of the New Testament text to be widely accepted, then, despite disclaimers, any argument to the contrary must be rejected out of hand. For the sake of personal integrity an individual such as Hodges may adduce strictly historical arguments for his position; but if one assumes this doctrine to be true and refuses to reconsider, then any textual method that does violence to it will be automatically rejected. For this reason, Hodges cannot 'entertain sensible arguments from any quarter no matter what theology they may be associated with'" (49–50). (2) "The other problem with Hodges's position is that he himself does not hold to it consistently. In another work ["A Defense of the Majority Text," Dallas Seminary, n.d., p. 18], Hodges openly states that his historical (note, historical, not theological) arguments for the superiority of the Majority text will appeal only to those of similar theological conviction. . . ." (50). Not only this, but elsewhere Hodges rejects Hort's views because of their rationalistic presuppositions, arguing that the "New Testament text is not like any other ancient text" and that "the logic of faith demands that documents so unique cannot have had a history wholly like that of secular writings" (Hodges, "Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism," *BSac* 128 [1971] 29–30). Ehrman concludes from this that "apart from the fact this amounts to little more than rhetoric, a paradigmatic *argumentum ad hominem*, it is clear that Hodges chooses to reject the principles of Wes[t]cott and Hort simply because they do not accept his doctrine of revelation and preservation. Under such circumstances, to turn around and say that all arguments for the contrary position will be given rational consideration is nothing short of misleading" (51).

manuscripts were to be counted, then modern translations would be vindicated rather than the King James, because the early Greek manuscripts which stand behind the vast bulk of Latin manuscripts and behind modern translations are quite similar.<sup>27</sup> At one point, E. F. Hills argued that "God must preserve this text, not secretly, not hidden away in a box for hundreds of years or mouldering unnoticed on some library shelf, but openly before the eyes of all men through the continuous usage of His Church."<sup>28</sup> Preservation is therefore linked to public accessibility. It is precisely at this point that the argument for counting only Greek manuscripts begs the question. As Ehrman points out:

[According to Hills.] the subsequent preservation of the New Testament text did not extend to guaranteeing the accuracy of its translation into other languages, but only to protecting the relative purity of the Greek text itself. Here, of course, his prior argument that God preserved the text for the sake of His church becomes irrelevant—since only a select minority in the church has ever known Greek.<sup>29</sup>

*b. When do you count?* Majority text advocates tacitly assume that since most Greek manuscripts extant today belong to the Byzantine text, most Greek manuscripts throughout church history have belonged to the Byzantine text. But this assumption begs the question in the extreme, since there is not one solid shred of evidence that the Byzantine text even existed in the first three centuries of the Christian era.<sup>30</sup> Not only this, but as far as our extant witnesses reveal, the Byzantine text did not become the majority text until the ninth century. Furthermore, for the letters of Paul, there is no majority text manuscript before the ninth century. To embrace the MT/TR text for the *corpus Paulinum*, then, requires an 800-year leap of faith. Not only is this a severe instance of *petitio principii*, but it also is a cavalier treatment of historical evidence unbecoming of those who boast a faith which cannot be divorced from history. No majority text advocate would tolerate such a fideistic leap regarding the person and work of Christ;<sup>31</sup> how then can they employ it when it comes to the text?

*c. Where do you count?* Suppose we were to assume that only Greek manuscripts should be counted. And suppose further that public

<sup>27</sup>B. M. Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission and Limitations* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 359.

<sup>28</sup>E. F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended!*, 31.

<sup>29</sup>Ehrman, "Quest for Methodology," 43.

<sup>30</sup>See Wallace, "The Majority Text and the Original Text," 159–66.

<sup>31</sup>Ironically, in this instance majority text advocates—all of whom are theologically conservative—share by analogy some similarities with Bultmann's separation of the Christ of history and the Christ preached by the early church (i.e., the Christ of faith or Kerygmatic Christ).



accessibility is a legitimate divine motive for preservation. Given these two assumptions, one would expect the Byzantine text-type to be readily accessible in all pockets of the ancient Greek-speaking world. But that is demonstrably not true. For example, it was not readily available to Christians in Egypt in the first four centuries. After carefully investigating the Gospel quotations of Didymus, a fourth-century Egyptian writer, Ehrman concludes, "These findings indicate that no 'proto-Byzantine' text existed in Alexandria in Didymus' day or, at least if it did, it made no impact on the *mainstream* of the textual tradition there."<sup>32</sup> What confirms this further is that in several places Origen, the great Christian textual scholar, speaks of textual variants that were in a majority of manuscripts in his day, yet today are in a minority, and vice versa.<sup>33</sup> Granting every gratuitous concession to majority text advocates, in the least this shows that no majority text was readily available to Christians in Egypt. And if that is the case, then how can they argue for a majority on the basis of public accessibility?

## 2. Faulty Assumptions

More serious than a question-begging approach are several decidedly faulty assumptions made by MT/TR advocates. These assumptions are shown to be faulty either by the force of logic or empirical evidence.

*a. Preservation is a necessary corollary of inspiration.* E. F. Hills argued:

If the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scriptures is a true doctrine the doctrine of the providential preservation of these Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control . . . . God must have done this . . . .<sup>34</sup>

In other words, preservation proceeds from and is a necessary consequence of inspiration. Or, in the words of Jasper James Ray, "the writing of the Word of God by inspiration is no greater miracle than the miracle of its preservation . . . ."<sup>35</sup> Ehrman has ably pointed out the logical consequences of such linkage:

Any claim that God preserved the New Testament text intact, giving His church actual, not theoretical, possession of it, must mean one of three things—either 1) God preserved it in all the extant manuscripts so that

<sup>32</sup>B. Ehrman, *Didymus the Blind and the Text of the Gospels* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 260 (italics added).

<sup>33</sup>See Wallace, "The Majority Text and the Original Text," 166.

<sup>34</sup>Hills, *King James Version Defended!*, 8.

<sup>35</sup>Ray, *God Wrote Only One Bible*, 104.

none of them contain any textual corruptions, or 2) He preserved it in a group of manuscripts, none of which contain any corruptions, or 3) He preserved it in a solitary manuscript which alone contains no corruptions.<sup>36</sup>

The problem with these first and second possibilities is that neither one of them is true: no two NT manuscripts agree completely—in fact, there are between six and ten variations per chapter for the closest two manuscripts.

Is it possible that the NT text was preserved intact in a single manuscript? No one argues this particular point, because it is easily demonstrable that every manuscript has scribal errors in it. However, one group does argue that a particular printed edition of the NT has been providentially preserved. Proponents of the Textus Receptus (as opposed to those who argue for the majority text<sup>37</sup>) believe that the TR satisfies this third requirement. There are numerous problems with such a view,<sup>38</sup> but it should be noted that TR advocates are at least consistent in putting preservation on the same level with inspiration.

Nevertheless, there seems to be one major flaw in their approach, from a biblical standpoint: If the TR equals the original text, then the editor must have been just as inspired as the original writers, for he not only selected what readings were to go in this first published edition, but he also created some of the readings. To be specific, the last leaf of Erasmus' copy of Revelation was missing, so he "back-translated" from Latin into Greek and thereby created numerous readings which have never been found in any Greek manuscript. This should cause some pause to those conservative Protestants who hail Erasmus' text as identical with the original, for such a view implies that revelation continued into at least the sixteenth century. Not only this, but Erasmus was a Roman Catholic who battled papists and Protestants alike—the very man against whom Martin Luther wrote his famous *Bondage of the Will*. Are conservative Protestants willing to say that this man was just as inspired as the apostle Paul or John? What is especially ironic about this is that most TR advocates reject the text of Westcott and

<sup>36</sup>Ehrman, "Quest for Methodology," 44.

<sup>37</sup>These two text deposits are not identical: there are almost 2,000 differences between them.

<sup>38</sup>E.g., which TR? One of the editions of Erasmus, or Beza, or the Elzevir brothers? The TR has gone through numerous changes, not the least because Erasmus did a rather poor job of editing the text. Further, once one argues for the infallibility of the TR, any arguments drawn from public accessibility must be limited to the time of the Reformation and beyond, since the TR has scores of readings which not only were not in the majority beforehand, but were also nonexistent.

Hort because (in part), as high church Anglicans, they had Roman Catholic leanings!<sup>39</sup>

*b. Preservation must be through "majority rule."* To be sure, most scholars who employ the doctrine of preservation as a text-critical argument do not embrace the TR as equal to the original text. In this, they are not as consistent about the corollary between inspiration and preservation, but they are certainly more rational in other ways. Nevertheless, there are four serious objections to the argument that preservation must be through "majority rule." First, no where does the Bible state how God would preserve the NT text. Thus their argument is based squarely on silence.

Second, as Sturz points out,

... the Bible itself reveals that there have been occasions when there has been a famine or dearth of the Word of God. One thinks, for example, of the days of Josiah (II Kings 22:8ff.) when apparently the Scriptures were reduced to one copy. Nevertheless, it still could be said that God's Word was preserved.<sup>40</sup>

Third, in light of this biblical precedent of how God preserved a portion of the Old Testament, can we not see the hand of God guiding a man such as Constantin von Tischendorf to St. Catherine's monastery at the base of Mount Sinai, only to discover codex Sinaiticus—the oldest complete NT known to exist—before it met an untimely demise as kindling for the furnace?<sup>41</sup> There are, in fact, countless stories of manuscript

<sup>39</sup>Not infrequently MT/TR advocates quote from the *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1896). A favorite passage is where Hort writes to Westcott on October 17, 1865: "I have been persuaded for many years that Mary-worship and 'Jesus'-worship have very much in common in their causes and their results" (2:50). Cf. B. C. Wilkinson, "Our Authorized Bible Vindicated," in *Which Bible?*, 279; D. A. Waite, *The Theological Heresies of Westcott and Hort*, 39–42.

In passing, it could, with equal justification, be mentioned that not only was Erasmus more Catholic than either Westcott or Hort, but even Burgon had a hidden agenda in his vigorous defense of the longer ending of Mark: he held to baptismal regeneration and Mark 16:16 seemed to him to be the strongest proof-text of this doctrine. E. F. Hills writes that he was "strenuously upholding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration" ("The Magnificent Burgon," in *Which Bible?*, 87). That this is not an *argumentum ad hominem* is evident by the fact that his personal beliefs directly affected his text-critical approach. (It is perhaps not insignificant that when Hills' essay was reproduced in *True or False?* [in Fuller's introduction], this line about Burgon's beliefs was dropped.)

<sup>40</sup>H. A. Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984) 41–42.

<sup>41</sup>Contrary to popular belief, although the monks were indeed burning old biblical manuscripts to keep warm, codex Sinaiticus was not the next in line. (Cf. B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3d, enlarged

discoveries which seem to speak quite eloquently for God's providential preservation of the text.<sup>42</sup> A more biblically based view of God's providential ways would not argue that God's hand is only seen or always seen in "majority rule."

Fourth, theologically one may wish to argue against the majority: usually it is the remnant, not the majority, that is right. If the history of Christianity teaches us anything, it teaches us that the majority is rarely right. Taylor points out a particularly cogent analogy:

... Hills' understanding of God's providential dealings in history fails to account for greater problems than the comparatively minor differences between the Textus Receptus and its modern rival. For example, God in His providence allowed in the medieval ages the doctrine of justification by faith to be almost eclipsed from public understanding until the Reformation leaders again called attention to that doctrine. Would Hills have God concerned that an exact form of the New Testament text be available but unconcerned about serious and widespread soteriological misunderstandings?<sup>43</sup>

The weight of this argument is especially felt when one considers that the variations between the majority text and modern critical texts are qualitatively very minor; most would say that no doctrine is affected by such differences.<sup>44</sup> If God did not protect a major doctrine like justification, on what basis can we argue that he would protect one form of the text over another when no doctrinal issues are at stake?<sup>45</sup>

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ed. [Oxford: University Press, 1992] 42–45.) Nevertheless, one could not argue that this manuscript was out of harm's way, in light of the midwinter practice at the monastery.

<sup>42</sup>One thinks, for example, of C. H. Roberts rummaging through the basement of the John Rylands Library of Manchester University in 1935, only to chance upon a small scrap of papyrus which included portions of five verses from John's gospel (18:31–33, 37–38), and was dated in the first half of the second century. In light of the radical German view of the date of John as c. A.D. 170 (harking back to F. C. Bauer a century earlier), this small fragmentary copy of John's gospel, as one scholar put it, "sent two tons of German scholarship to the flames."

<sup>43</sup>R. A. Taylor, "The Modern Debate Concerning the Greek Textus Receptus: A Critical Examination of the Textual Views of Edward F. Hills" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bob Jones University, 1973) 156.

<sup>44</sup>Cf., e.g., D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 56.

<sup>45</sup>Sturz gives some further helpful analogies (*Byzantine Text-Type*, 38): "Preservation of the Word of God is promised in Scripture, and inspiration and preservation are related doctrines, but they are distinct from each other, and there is a danger in making one the necessary corollary of the other. The Scriptures do not do this. God, having given the perfect revelation by verbal inspiration, was under no special or logical obligation to see that man did not corrupt it. He created the first man perfect, but He was under no obligation to keep him perfect. Or to use another illustration, having created all things perfect, God was not obligated to see that the pristine perfection of the world was maintained. In His providence the world was allowed to suffer the Fall and to endure a defacement of its original condition."

c. *Public accessibility of a pure text is a theological necessity.* We have touched on this to some degree already—at least by way of analogy. But the argument is also contradicted by direct evidence. Pickering believes that “God *has* preserved the text of the New Testament in a very pure form and it has been readily available to His followers in every age throughout 1900 years.”<sup>46</sup> There are two fundamental problems with this view.

First, assuming that the majority text (as opposed to the TR) is the original, then this pure form of text has become available only since 1982.<sup>47</sup> The *Textus Receptus* differs from it in almost 2,000 places—and in fact has several readings which have “never been found in any known Greek manuscript,” and scores, perhaps hundreds, of readings which depend on only a handful of very late manuscripts.<sup>48</sup> Many of these passages are theologically significant texts.<sup>49</sup> Yet virtually no one had access to any other text from 1516 to 1881, a period of over 350 years. In light of this, it is difficult to understand what Pickering means when he says that this pure text “has been readily available to [God’s] followers in every age throughout 1900 years.”<sup>50</sup> Purity, it seems, has to be a relative term—and, if so, it certainly cannot be marshaled as a theological argument.

Second, again, assuming that the majority text is the original, and that it has been readily available to Christians for 1900 years, then it must have been readily available to Christians in Egypt in the first four centuries. But this is demonstrably not true, as we have already shown.<sup>51</sup> Pickering speaks of our early Alexandrian witnesses as “polluted” and as coming from a “sewer pipe.”<sup>52</sup> Now if these manuscripts

<sup>46</sup>Pickering, “Burgon,” 90.

<sup>47</sup>Pickering states, “In terms of closeness to the original, the King James Version and the *Textus Receptus* have been the best available up to now. In 1982 Thomas Nelson Publishers brought out a critical edition of the Traditional Text (Majority, “Byzantine”) under the editorship of Zane C. Hodges, Arthur L. Farstad, and others which while not definitive will prove to be very close to the final product, I believe. In it we have an excellent interim Greek Text to use until the full and final story can be told” (*Identity*, 150).

<sup>48</sup>Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 100.

<sup>49</sup>Cf., in particular, 1 John 5:7–8 and Rev 22:19.

<sup>50</sup>To be sure, Pickering was unaware that there would be that many differences between the TR and *Majority Text* when he wrote this note. Originally, his estimate was between 500 and 1,000 differences (“Burgon,” 120). But in light of the 2,000 differences, “purity” becomes such an elastic term that, in the least, it is removed from being a doctrinal consideration.

<sup>51</sup>Literally scores of studies have been done to prove this, none of which Pickering seems to be aware. Gordon Fee speaks of Pickering’s “neglect of literally scores of scholarly studies that contravene his assertions” and “The overlooked bibliography here is so large that it can hardly be given in a footnote. For example, I know eleven different studies on Origen alone that contradict all of Pickering’s discussion, and not one of them is even recognized to have existed” (“A Critique of W. N. Pickering’s *The Identity of the New Testament Text*: A Review Article,” *WTJ* 41 [1978–79] 415).

<sup>52</sup>“Burgon,” 93.

are really that defective, and if this is all Egypt had in the first three or four centuries, then this peculiar doctrine of preservation is in serious jeopardy, for those ancient Egyptian Christians had no access to the pure stream of the majority text. Therefore, if one were to define preservation in terms of the majority text, he would end up with a view which speaks very poorly of God's sovereign care of the text in ancient Egypt.<sup>53</sup>

*d. Certainty is identical with truth.* It seems that the underlying motive behind MT/TR advocacy is the equation of certainty with truth. For TR advocates, certainty is to be found in a printed edition of the New Testament. Hills' despair of finding absolute textual certainty through the standard means of textual criticism ultimately led him to abandon textual criticism altogether and replace it with a settled text, the Textus Receptus. Theo Letis, the self-proclaimed heir of Hills' mantle, argues that "without a methodology that has for its agenda the determination of a continuous, obviously providentially preserved text . . . we are, in principle, left with maximum uncertainty, as Edward Hills characterizes it, versus the maximum certainty afforded by the methodology that seeks a providentially preserved text."<sup>54</sup>

For MT advocates, certainty is found in the majority of manuscripts. Pickering argues, for example, that "If the Scriptures have *not* been preserved then the doctrine of Inspiration is a purely academic matter with no relevance for us today. If we do not have the inspired Words or do not *know* precisely which they be, then the doctrine of Inspiration is inapplicable."<sup>55</sup> At one point Pickering even states that uncertainty over the text also makes inspiration untrue.<sup>56</sup>

In response, several things can be mentioned. First, it should be noted that in one respect TR advocates are much more consistent than MT advocates: not only do they put preservation on exactly the same level as inspiration, but they also can be more certain about the text,

<sup>53</sup>We could add here an argument concerning the early versions. None of the versions produced in the first three centuries A.D. was based on the Byzantine text. But if the majority text view is right, then each one of these versions was based on polluted Greek manuscripts—a suggestion that does not augur well for God's providential care of the NT text, as that care is understood by the majority text view. But if these versions were based on polluted manuscripts, one would expect them to have come from (and be used in) only one isolated region (for if only *some* Christians did not have access to the pure text, God's sovereignty might be supposed still to be left intact). This, however, is not the case: the Coptic, Ethiopic, Latin, and Syriac versions came from all over the Mediterranean region. In none of these locales was the Byzantine text apparently used. (For further discussion and documentation, see Wallace, "The Majority Text and the Original Text," 161–62.)

<sup>54</sup>Letis, *Continuing Debate*, 200.

<sup>55</sup>Pickering, "Burgon," 88.

<sup>56</sup>W. N. Pickering, "Mark 16:9–20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration" (unpublished paper distributed to members of the Majority Text Society, September, 1988) 1.

since they advocate a printed edition. But their argumentation is so palpably weak on other fronts that we will only make two observations here: (a) since the TR itself went through several different editions by Erasmus and others, TR advocates need to clarify which edition is the inspired one; (b) one simply cannot argue for the theological necessity of public accessibility throughout church history and for the TR in the same breath—for the TR did not exist during the first 1500 years of the Christian era. (Rather inconsistent, for example, is the logic of Theo Letis when he, on the one hand, argues that God must have preserved the pure text in an open, public, and accessible manner for Christians in every generation<sup>57</sup> and, on the other hand, he argues that “the Latin and non-majority readings [of the TR] were indeed restorations of ancient readings that fell out of the medieval Greek tradition”!<sup>58</sup>)

Second, regarding MT proponents, several criticisms can be leveled, two of which are as follows. (a) Pragmatically, there is in reality less certainty in their approach than there is among reasoned eclectics. In the Byzantine text, there are hundreds of splits where no clear majority emerges. One scholar recently found 52 variants within the majority text in the spaces of two verses.<sup>59</sup> In such places how are majority text advocates to decide what is original? Since their method is in essence purely external (i.e., counting manuscripts), in those places the majority text view has no solution, and no certainty. At one point, Pickering recognized this lack of certainty: “Not only are we presently unable to specify the precise wording of the original text, but it will require considerable time and effort before we can be in a position to do so.”<sup>60</sup> Ironically, therefore, according to Pickering’s own theological construct, inspiration for him must be neither relevant nor true. (b) Logically/theologically, the equation of inspiration with man’s recognition of what is inspired (in all its particulars) virtually puts God at the mercy of man and requires omniscience of man. The burden is so great that a text critical method of merely counting noses seems to be the only way in which human beings can be “relatively omniscient.” In

<sup>57</sup>Letis, *Continuing Debate*, 192–94.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>59</sup>K. Aland, “The Text of the Church?” (*TrinJ* 8 [1987] 136–37), commenting on 2 Cor 1:6–7a. To be fair, Aland does not state whether there is no clear majority 52 times or whether the Byzantine manuscripts have a few defectors 52 times. Nevertheless, his point is that an assumption as to what really constitutes a majority is based on faulty and partial evidence (e.g., von Soden’s apparatus), not on an actual examination of the majority of manuscripts. Until that is done, it is impossible to speak definitively about what the majority of manuscripts actually read.

<sup>60</sup>*Identity of the New Testament Text*, 150. In Pickering’s theological construct, then, the doctrine of inspiration has no significance, for elsewhere he argued “If we do not have the inspired Words or do not know precisely which they be, then the doctrine of Inspiration is inapplicable” (“Burgon,” 88).

what other area of Christian teaching is man's recognition required for a doctrine to be true?

Finally, a general criticism against both the MT and TR positions: the quest for certainty is not the same as a quest for truth. There is a subtle but important distinction between the two. Truth is objective reality; certainty is the level of subjective apprehension of something perceived to be true. But in the recognition that truth is objective reality, it is easy to confuse the fact of this reality with how one knows what it is. Frequently the most black-and-white, dogmatic method of arriving at truth is perceived to be truth itself. Indeed, people with deep religious convictions are very often quite certain about an untruth. For example, cultists often hold to their positions quite dogmatically and with a fideistic fervor that shames evangelicals; first-year Greek students want to speak of the aorist tense as meaning "once-and-for-all" action; and almost everyone wants simple answers to the complex questions of life. At bottom this quest for certainty, though often masquerading as a legitimate epistemological inquiry, is really a presuppositional stance, rooted in a psychological insecurity.<sup>61</sup>

To sum up so far: The TR/MT advocates get entangled in numerous question-begging approaches and faulty—even contradictory—assumptions in their arguments concerning the providential preservation of the text. That is not the worst of it, however. Their view also is non-biblical.

### 3. Non-Biblical Doctrinal Basis

We are often told that the consistently Christian view, or the only orthodox view of the text is one which embraces the Byzantine text-type, and that to embrace a different form of the text is to imbibe in heresy. Although this charge is vigorously denied by non-MT/TR evangelicals, the tables are rarely turned. It is our contention, however, that to use the doctrine of preservation in support of the MT/TR is to have a non-biblical view which cannot consistently be applied to both testaments. The majority text-preservation connection is biblically unfounded in four ways, two of which have already been touched on.

*a. Biblical silence.* As we have argued concerning the faulty assumption that preservation must be through "majority rule," the scriptures nowhere tell us how God would preserve the NT text. What

<sup>61</sup>Along this line is a significant corollary: those Christians who must have certainty in nonessential theological areas have a linear, or "domino," view of doctrine: if one falls, all fall. A more mature Christian, in our view, has a concentric view of doctrine: the more essential a doctrine is for salvation (e.g., the person of Christ), the closer it is to the center of his theological grid; the less essential a doctrine is (e.g., what he believes about eschatology), the more peripheral it is.



is ironic is that as much ink as MT/TR advocates spill on pressing the point that theirs is the only biblical view, when it comes to the preserved text being found in the majority of witnesses, they never quote one verse. Although they accuse other textual critics of rationalism, their argument for preservation via the majority has only a rational basis, not a biblical one. "God must have done this"<sup>62</sup>—not because the Bible says so, but because logic dictates that this must be the case.

*b. Old Testament examples of preservation.* Again, as we have already pointed out, the few OT examples of preservation of scripture do not herald the majority, but only the mere existence of a written witness. This fact leads to our third point—that the argument from preservation actually involves bibliological contradictions.

*c. A Marcionite view of the text.* Marcion was a second century heretic whose literary remains are found only in essays written against him. Metzger points out that

The main points of Marcion's teaching were the rejection of the Old Testament and a distinction between the Supreme God of goodness and an inferior God of justice, who was the Creator and the God of the Jews. He regarded Christ as the messenger of the Supreme God. The Old and New Testaments, Marcion argued, cannot be reconciled to each other.<sup>63</sup>

It is our contention that majority text advocates follow in Marcion's train when it comes to their doctrine of preservation because their theological argument does not work for the Old Testament. If our contention is true, then the dogmatic basis for the majority text is bibliologically schizophrenic. The evidence is of two kinds.

First, the argument that the divine motive for preservation is public availability—as poor an argument as it is for the Greek text—is even worse for the Hebrew. Not only is it alleged that "God must do more than merely preserve the inspired original New Testament text. He must preserve it in a public way . . . through the continuous usage of His Church,"<sup>64</sup> but that "down through the ages God's providential preservation of the New Testament has operated only through believers . . ."<sup>65</sup> But the Hebrew scriptures were neither preserved publicly—on display through the church as it were nor only through Christians. In light of this, how can majority text advocates escape the charge of Marcionism? In what way can they argue that a bibliological doctrine is true for the NT but is not true for the OT?

<sup>62</sup>Hills, *King James Version Defended!*, 8.

<sup>63</sup>B. M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 91–92.

<sup>64</sup>Hills, *King James Version Defended!*, 29.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 26.

Second, it is demonstrable that the OT text does not meet the criteria of preservation by majority rule. Although the Masoretic textual tradition (which represents almost the entirety of the extant Hebrew manuscripts) is highly regarded among most OT textual critics, none (to my knowledge) claim that it is errorless.<sup>66</sup> Most OT scholars today would agree with Klein that "Samuel MT is a poor text, marked by extensive haplography and corruption—only the MT of Hosea and Ezekiel is in worse condition."<sup>67</sup> In fact, a number of readings which only occur in versions (i.e., not in the extant Hebrew manuscripts at all), or are found only in one or two early Qumran manuscripts, have indisputable claim to authenticity in the face of the errant majority.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, in many places, all the extant Hebrew manuscripts (as well as versions) are so corrupt that scholars have been forced to emend the text on the basis of mere conjecture.<sup>69</sup> Significantly, many

<sup>66</sup>E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), for example, argues that "an arbitrary procedure which hastily and unnecessarily dismisses the traditional text . . . can lead only to a subjective form of the text which is uncertain historically and without any claim to theological relevance" (111). He further argues that the Masoretic text "has repeatedly been demonstrated to be the best witness to the text. Any deviation from it therefore requires justification" (113). Yet, as conservative as he is, he hastens to add, "But this does not mean that we should cling to [the Masoretic text] under all circumstances, because it also has its undeniable faults . . ." (ibid.). For similar statements regarding the value, but not inerrancy, of the Masoretic textual tradition, see F. E. Deist, *Toward the Text of the Old Testament* (Pretoria: Kerkboekhandel Transvaal, 1978) 247–49; R. W. Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: The Septuagint after Qumran* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 62–63; F. F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 61–69.

<sup>67</sup>Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament*, 70. Cf. also F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958) 179–81; E. Tov, "The State of the Question: Problems and Proposed Solutions," in 1972 *Proceedings: IOSCS and Pseudepigrapha*, ed. R. A. Kraft (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972) 3; and especially E. C. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978) 193–221.

<sup>68</sup>Cf. the discussions (and demonstrations) to this effect in D. Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament: 2. Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) 361–62 (Isa 49:12), 403–7 (Isa 53:11); Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 106–10 (on 108 he argues that Qumran MS 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> at Isa 2:20 is superior to MT); J. A. Sanders, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1967) 17; E. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1981) 70–72, 288–306; W. H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) 216–35; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 203–9; Cross, *Ancient Library*, 169, 189, 191; Bruce, *Second Thoughts*, 61–62, 66–69; Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament*, 62, 71, 74–76; C. E. Pfeiffer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1969) 101–9.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. especially J. Kennedy, *An Aid to the Textual Amendment of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928). In the editorial note N. Levison comments that "Dr. Kennedy was very conservative theologically. . . . [yet] he was possessed with an intense passion for the correction of the Massoretic Text, and, as will be seen from the

such conjectures (but not all) have been vindicated by the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls.<sup>70</sup> Majority text advocates simply do not grapple with these OT textual phenomena. And if they were to do so and were even to prove many minority text readings or conjectures false, our point would still stand. Only if they could demonstrate that all minority text readings and all conjectures were inferior (or at least probably so), could their argument hold water. The indisputable fact is that OT textual criticism simply cannot be conducted on the basis of counting noses. Since this is the case, either majority text advocates must abandon their theological premise altogether, or else be subject to the charge of a bibliological double standard.

*d. The biblical doctrine of preservation.* In light of the occasional necessity of conjectural emendation for the OT text, it is our contention that not only is the majority text argument for preservation entirely wrong-headed, but so is any doctrine of preservation which requires that the exact wording of the text be preserved at all. In spite of the fact that even opponents of the MT/TR view embrace such a doctrine,<sup>71</sup> it simply does not square with the evidence. Only three brief points will be made here, in hopes of stimulating a dialogue on this issue.

First, the doctrine of preservation was not a doctrine of the ancient church. In fact, it was not stated in any creed until the seventeenth

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contents of this book, it was no mere speculation but considered and conscientious study that led him to his conclusions" (p. vii). But note also Brownlee, *Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls*, 231 (where he accepts an emendation by C. C. Torrey for Isa 53:11, since "if the verse is to be scanned as poetry at all, some such alteration is necessary"); Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament*, 76 (on 1 Sam 14:47); Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 108 (on Jer 2:21); Bruce, *Second Thoughts*, 69 (on Isa 21:8; 53:11; and Deut 32:8); Deist, *Towards the Text of the Old Testament*, 247–49, 260; D. M. Fouts, "A Suggestion for Isaiah XXVI 16," *Vetus Testamentum* 41 (1991) 472–74.

<sup>70</sup>Ulrich notes that Josephus preserved "at least four genuine Samuel readings which were preserved by no other witness until 4QSam<sup>a</sup> was recovered" (*Samuel and Josephus*, 2). Cf. also Cross, *Ancient Library*, 189 ("4QSam<sup>a</sup> and I Chron. 21:16 preserve a verse [2 Sam. 24:16b] which has dropped out of MT by haplography . . ."); Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 142 (1QIsa<sup>a</sup> confirms conjectures at Isa 40:6 and 40:17); Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle*, 361–62 (1QIsa<sup>a</sup> at Isa 49:12) 403–7 (Isa 53:11); Brownlee, *Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls*, 218–19 (Isa 11:6; 21:8) 225–26 (Isa 49:12) 226–33 (Isa 53:11).

<sup>71</sup>Taylor's comments in "Modern Debate" are representative: "It is essential, then, that this distinction be maintained between the concepts of inspiration, which insures the reliability of the divine revelation, and preservation, which insures the availability of the divine revelation" (148); "It is certain that if God took such pains to insure by inspiration the accuracy of the original manuscripts, He would not leave to an undetermined fate the future of those writings" (154); "Nothing of the inspired writings has been lost as a result of the transmission of the text. This, too, is in keeping with God's preservation of the Scripture" (163). Cf. also Sturz, *Byzantine Text-Type*, 37–49, et al.

century (in the Westminster Confession of 1646). The recent arrival of such a doctrine, of course, does not necessarily argue against it—but neither does its youthfulness argue for it. Perhaps what needs to be explored more fully is precisely what the framers of the Westminster Confession and the Helvetic Consensus Formula (in 1675) really meant by providential preservation.

Second, the major scriptural texts alleged to support the doctrine of preservation need to be reexamined in a new light. I am aware of only one substantial articulation of the biblical basis for this doctrine by a majority text advocate. In Donald Brake's essay, "The Preservation of the Scriptures," five major passages are adduced as proof that preservation refers to the written Word of God: Ps 119:89, Isa 40:8, Matt 5:17–18, John 10:35, and 1 Pet 1:23–25.<sup>72</sup> One of the fundamental problems with the use of these passages is that merely because "God's Word" is mentioned in them it is assumed that the written, canonical, revelation of God is meant.<sup>73</sup> But 1 Pet 1:23–25, for example, in quoting Isa 40:8, uses ῥῆμα (not λόγος)—a term which typically refers to the spoken word.<sup>74</sup> Brake's interpretation of Ps 119:89 ("For ever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven") is, to put it mildly, improbable: "The Word which is settled in heaven was placed there by a deliberate and purposeful act of God Himself."<sup>75</sup> It seems that a better interpretation of all these texts is that they are statements concerning either divine ethical principles (i.e., moral laws which cannot be violated without some kind of consequences) or the promise of fulfilled prophecy.<sup>76</sup> The assumptions that most evangelicals make about the doctrine of preservation need to be scrutinized in light of this exegetical construct.

<sup>72</sup>Donald L. Brake, "The Preservation of the Scriptures," in *Counterfeit or Genuine?*, 175–218. This essay is a modification of Brake's Th.M. thesis (Dallas Seminary, 1970), "The Doctrine of the Preservation of the Scriptures."

<sup>73</sup>In passing, it should be noted that all these proof-texts, if they refer to the written word at all, refer to the OT. The bibliological inconsistency is thus heightened, for MT/TR advocates apply this doctrine only to the NT.

<sup>74</sup>BAGD, 735 (1).

<sup>75</sup>Brake, "Preservation," 181–82. Apparently Brake means by this that an exact written copy of the originals was brought to heaven. Not only is this difficult to believe, but it renders the "public accessibility" idea absolutely worthless.

<sup>76</sup>"The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), in its context, means "all will be fulfilled" or "all of it is true" rather than "we must have every word preserved." "Not one jot or tittle from the law will pass away until all is fulfilled" (Matt 5:18) plainly refers either to the ethical principles of the law or the fulfillment of prophecy, or both. (The validity of each of these options turns, to some degree, on how πληρώω is used elsewhere in Matthew and the weight given to those texts—e.g., are Matthew's OT quotation introductory formulae [ἵνα πληρωθῇ in 1:23; 2:15; 4:14, etc., connecting the term to eschatological fulfillment] more significant or is Jesus' own use of πληρώω [in 3:15, connecting it to ethical fulfillment] more significant?) Either way, the idea of preservation of the written text is quite foreign to the context.

Third, if the doctrine of the preservation of scripture has neither ancient historical roots, nor any direct biblical basis, what can we legitimately say about the text of the New Testament? My own preference is to speak of God's providential care of the text as can be seen throughout church history, without elevating such to the level of doctrine. If this makes us theologically uncomfortable, it should at the same time make us at ease historically, for the NT is the most remarkably preserved text of the ancient world—both in terms of the quantity of manuscripts and in their temporal proximity to the originals. Not only this, but the fact that no major doctrine is affected by any viable textual variant surely speaks of God's providential care of the text. Just because there is no verse to prove this does not make it any less true.<sup>77</sup>

### *C. Conclusion on the Arguments concerning Preservation*

In conclusion, MT/TR advocates argue from a theological vantage point which begs the question historically and logically. More serious

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Occasionally Matt 24:35 ("Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away") is used in support of preservation. But once again, even though this text has the advantage of now referring to Jesus' words (as opposed to the OT), the context is clearly eschatological: thus the words of Jesus have certainty of fulfillment. That the text does not here mean that his words will all be preserved in written form is absolutely certain because (1) this is not only foreign to the context, but implies that the written gospels were conceived at this stage in *Heilsgeschichte*—decades before a need for them was apparently felt; (2) we certainly do not have all of Jesus' words recorded—either in scripture or elsewhere (cf. John 20:30 and 21:25).

<sup>77</sup>A possible objection to this statement might be that, on the one hand, we criticize MT advocates for their rational leap of linking preservation to the majority, while on the other hand, here we argue for providential care without having a biblical basis. Is this not the same thing? No. That preservation is to be seen in the majority is an *a priori* assumption turned into a doctrine; that the doctrinal content of the Bible is not affected by the variants is an *a posteriori* demonstration which stops short of dogma. Thus if a viable variant were to turn up that affected a major doctrine, our view of God's providential care would not be in jeopardy, though it would be reworded. An analogy might be seen in two twentieth century wars: One could say that God's hand was seen in the Allies' defeat of the Axis in World War II, as well as the Coalition's defeat of Iraq in the Persian Gulf War. But on occasion, a given battle in which the weather conditions had previously been reported as quite favorable to the Allies/Coalition's cause turned out to be unfavorable, this would not alter our overall picture of God's sovereignty. Rather, we simply could not appeal to that battle in support of our view. Similarly, our view of God's providential care of the text does not depend on the nonexistence of viable variants which teach heresy precisely because we are not affirming such on a doctrinal level. Our statement is made solely on the basis of the evidence. And just as historical investigation might uncover certain environmental conditions, or mechanical failures, etc., which were unfavorable to the Coalition forces for a given battle, still the outcome of the Persian Gulf War is not at all altered by such evidence—even so any new discoveries of manuscripts may cause us to reshape how we speak of God's providential care of the text, but the overall fact derived from empirical evidence is still the same.

than *petitio principii*, they make several faulty assumptions which not only run aground on rational and empirical rocks, but ultimately backfire. The most telling assumption is that certainty equals truth. This is an evangelical disease: for most of us, at some point, the quest for certainty has replaced the quest for truth. But even for majority text advocates, this quest must, in the last analysis, remain unfulfilled. The worst feature of their agenda, however, is not the faulty assumptions. It is that their view of preservation not only is non-biblical, it is also bibliologically schizophrenic in that it cannot work for both testaments. And that, to a majority text or Textus Receptus advocate—as it would be to any conservative Christian—is the most damaging aspect of their theological agenda.

## II. INSPIRATION

Under the general topic of inspiration are two arguments: (1) if any portion of the NT is lost, then verbal-plenary inspiration is thereby falsified; and (2) only in the Byzantine text-type do we have an inerrant NT. This first argument is really the converse of the argument from preservation, while the second argument is a corollary of a corollary.

### A. Does Loss of Text Falsify Inspiration?

In his paper, "Mark 16:9–20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration,"<sup>78</sup> Wilbur Pickering argues that if any portion of the NT is lost, then inspiration is not only irrelevant—it also is not true:

Among those who wish to believe or claim that Mark's Gospel was inspired by the Holy Spirit, that it is God's Word, I am not aware of any who are prepared to believe that it could have been God's intention to terminate the book with εφοβουντο γαρ.<sup>79</sup>

Are we to say that God was unable to protect the text of Mark or that He just couldn't be bothered? I see no other alternative—either He didn't care or He was helpless. And either option is fatal to the claim that Mark's Gospel is "God-breathed."<sup>80</sup> . . . if God was powerless to protect His Word then He wouldn't really be God and it wouldn't make all that much difference what He said.<sup>81</sup> . . . If God permitted the original ending of Mark to be lost then in fact we do not have an inspired text.<sup>82</sup>

Anyone who denies the authenticity of Mark 16:9–20 cannot consistently affirm the Divine Inspiration of Mark 1:1–16:8. I now submit the question to the reader: have I not demonstrated that to reject Mark 16:9–20 is to relinquish the doctrine of Divine Inspiration—for Mark, certainly, but by extension for the rest of the Bible?<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup>A paper circulated to members of the Majority Text Society, September, 1988.

<sup>79</sup>Pickering, "Mark 16:9–20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration," 1.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 4.

Majority text advocates, as we have seen, argue that if there is uncertainty over the wording of the text, inspiration becomes irrelevant. Pickering's argument goes one step beyond: if part of the text is lost, then "we do not have an inspired text."

This argument seems flawed on five fronts. First, it is special pleading. One has to accept Pickering's (incomplete) syllogism for this to be true: if God was not able or did not care to protect the text, then inspiration is not true. Why is it not possible for the text to be originally inspired but now lost? Apparently, once again, inspiration necessitates preservation. Further, why is it necessary to impugn either God's power or his goodness if part of the NT is lost? Analogously, would anyone argue that if Christians—who are born of God—sin, then God is either powerless or not good enough to prevent them from sinning?

Second, as we have already mentioned in the first section of this paper, Pickering assumes that inspiration necessitates preservation. Yet, if our arguments against this supposition are correct, then this new argument (*viz.*, lack of preservation implies non-inspiration) carries no weight.

Third, this approach is also Marcionite if there is ever a need for conjectural emendation for the Old Testament. Since that is the case, the loss of text (whether it be one word or a whole chapter) in principle cannot be used as a theological argument for a text critical viewpoint—otherwise proponents of such a view have to say that the OT is not inspired.

Fourth, there is a tacit assumption on the part of Pickering that everything a biblical author writes is inspired. But this is almost certainly not true, as can be seen by the lost epistles of Paul and the agrapha of Jesus. The argument is this: there seem to be a few, fairly well-attested (in patristic literature), authentic sayings of Jesus which are not found in the Gospels or the rest of the New Testament. Of course, evangelicals would claim that they are inerrant. But they would not be inspired because inspiration refers strictly to what is inscripturated within the canon. Further, Paul seems to have written three or four letters to the Corinthians, perhaps a now-lost letter to the Laodiceans,<sup>84</sup> and apparently more than a few letters before 2 Thessalonians.<sup>85</sup> If some NT epistles could be lost, and even some authentic sayings of

<sup>84</sup>Col 4:15–16 speaks of a letter coming to the Colossians from the Laodiceans. This is either now lost (the known "Letter to the Laodiceans" is forged) or is the letter to the Ephesians which circulated counterclockwise through Asia Minor, going from Ephesus, to Laodicea, to Colossae.

<sup>85</sup>The statement in 3:17 ("this greeting is in my own hand, Paul's, which is a sign in every letter [of mine]") seems to imply a well-known practice. Yet, most NT scholars would date only Galatians and 1 Thessalonians as coming prior to this letter—i.e., among the known letters of Paul.

Jesus could show up outside the NT, then either they were not inspired or else they were inspired but not preserved. Assuming the former to be true, then the question facing us in Mark's Gospel is whether an inspired writer can author non-inspired material within the same document—material which is now lost. Such a possibility admittedly opens up a Pandora's box for evangelicals, and certainly deserves critical thought and dialogue. Nevertheless, the analogies with the lost epistles of Paul and the authentic, non-canonical agrapha of Jesus seem to damage Pickering's contention that if the last portion of Mark's Gospel is lost, then inspiration is defeated.

Finally, although Pickering is unaware of any evangelical who thinks Mark ended his Gospel at verse 8, there does indeed seem to be an increasing number of scholars who believe this, evangelicals included among them.<sup>86</sup> Ernest Best states, for example, that "It is in keeping with other parts of his Gospel that Mark should not give an explicit account of a conclusion where this is already well known to his readers."<sup>87</sup> Further, he argues that "it is not a story which has been rounded off but an open story intended to draw us on further."<sup>88</sup> At one point he makes a rather intriguing suggestion:

Finally it is from the point of view of drama that we can appreciate most easily the conclusion to the Gospel. By its very nature the conclusion forces us to think out for ourselves the Gospel's challenge. It would have been easy to finish with Jesus' victorious appearances to comfort the disciples: they all lived happily ever after. Instead the end is difficult . . .

<sup>86</sup>So much so that W. R. Telford could argue, "While a number of scholars would still adhere to the view that the Gospel originally extended beyond 16:8, more and more are coming to the opinion that it was intended to end at 16:8, and that it does so indeed, in literary terms, with dramatic appositeness" ("Introduction: The Gospel of Mark," in *The Interpretation of Mark*, ed. W. R. Telford [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985] 26). Cf. also C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Vol. 27 in the Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1986) 659 ("Mark did indeed finish his gospel at v. 8, and . . . he had a specific and well-defined purpose in doing so"); R. P. Meye, "Mark 16:8—The Ending of Mark's Gospel," *BibRes* 14 (1969) 33–43; H. Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, in the New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 351–54; H. Paulsen, "Mark xvi. 1–8," *NovT* 22 (1980) 138–70; N. R. Petersen, "When Is the End Not the End? Literary Reflections on the Ending of Mark's Narrative," *Interp* 34 (1980) 151–66; T. E. Boomershine and G. L. Bartholomew, "The Narrative Technique of Mark 16:8," *JBL* 100 (1981) 213–23. Among those who are evangelicals (in the strictest sense of the word—i.e., inerrantists), a number of authors antedating Pickering's essay held to this view: cf., e.g., N. B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1944) 86–118; W. L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark in the New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 582–92; J. D. Grassmick also seems to lean toward this view (*Mark in the Bible Knowledge Commentary* [Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983] 193–94).

<sup>87</sup>E. Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983) 73.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.



The readers or hearers of Mark know the disciples did see Jesus . . . Listen to the story as a believer and work it out for yourself. It is like one of Jesus' own parables: the hearer is forced to go on thinking.<sup>89</sup>

Although one would not say that Ernest Best is an arch-conservative, his overall interpretation of the reason for the shorter ending should cause no offense to evangelicals, as is evident by the fact that a number of evangelicals do believe that the Gospel was intended to end at verse 8.<sup>90</sup>

The argument that loss of text invalidates inspiration is, therefore, seen to be logically fallacious, bibliologically inconsistent, and irrelevant for those evangelicals who believe that Mark intended to end his Gospel at the eighth verse of chapter sixteen.

### *B. Does the Byzantine Text-type Have Sole Claim to Inerrancy?*

Occasionally, MT/TR advocates appeal to inerrancy in support of the Byzantine text-type's superiority. The argument is not new,<sup>91</sup> but it has received a clear articulation recently by James A. Borland. In his article, "Re-examining New Testament Textual-Critical Principles and Practices Used to Negate Inerrancy,"<sup>92</sup> Borland argues that the Alexandrian readings of Ἀσάφ in Matt 1:7, Ἀμῶς in 1:10, and τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος in Luke 23:45 are errors and must, for this reason, be rejected (for otherwise they impugn the character of the biblical authors and thereby falsify inerrancy). The reason such are errors, according to Borland, is that, with regard to the Matthean passage, Asaph and Amos were not kings (thus, spelling errors on the part of early Alexandrian scribes); and with regard to the Lukan passage, since "a solar eclipse is impossible astronomically during the full moon of the Passover when sun and moon are 180 degrees apart in relation to the earth"<sup>93</sup> and since the verb ἐκλείπω, when used with ἥλιος,

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>90</sup>See n. 86. Besides literary criticism, another argument could be used to support the view that the gospel ended here: only if Mark's Gospel were originally published in codex form (in which case the last leaf could have possibly fallen off) could one argue that the ending of Mark was lost. But if, as extrabiblical parallels are increasingly showing to be more likely, the Gospel was originally written on a scroll, then the last portion of the book, being at the center of the scroll, would be the least likely portion of the book to be lost.

<sup>91</sup>Cf., e.g., G. Salmon, *Some Thoughts on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: John Murray, 1897) 26; H. C. Hoskier, "Codex Vaticanus and Its Allies," in *Which Bible?*, 143.

<sup>92</sup>J. A. Borland, "Re-examining New Testament Textual-Critical Principles and Practices Used to Negate Inerrancy," *JETS* 25 (1982) 499–506; reprinted in Letis, *Continuing Debate*, 46–57. All references in this paper are to the original article in *JETS*.

<sup>93</sup>Borland, "Negate Inerrancy," 504.

normally indicated an eclipse,<sup>94</sup> Luke would err if he had written this. In both the Matthean texts and the Lukan passage, the Byzantine text-type has readings which do not involve such errors (respectively, Ἀσά, Ἀμῶν, καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος ["and the sun was darkened"]). Borland's conclusion is that (1) only in the Byzantine text-type do we have an inerrant Bible and (2) we must pour our text-critical methodology through the doctrinal grid of inerrancy.<sup>95</sup>

Our critique of Borland's linking of inerrancy to the Byzantine text-type is fourfold. First, his argument seems to question either the intelligence or the doctrinal conviction of virtually all members of the Evangelical Theological Society as well as any other non-MT/TR inerrantists—stretching from B. B. Warfield to D. A. Carson. Carson goes so far as to say: "I cannot think of a single great theological writer who has given his energies to defend a high view of Scripture and who has adopted the TR, since the discovery of the great uncials and, later, the papyri and other finds."<sup>96</sup>

Second, Borland's view suffers from historical myopia. That is to say, he is superimposing his modern-day, twentieth-century definition of inerrancy on the text. But should not our definition of inerrancy be shaped by both the biblical statements which imply this doctrine as well as the phenomena which indicate how the biblical authors understood it? One is reminded of a typical layman's understanding of inerrancy: the events of the Gospels must be in strict chronological sequence, the red letters in the Bible refer to the *ipsissima verba* (exact words) of Jesus, etc. Faced with the contrary evidence, would it be appropriate to change the text to suit one's doctrine? More analogous still is the Purist controversy in the seventh century.

The beginning of the seventeenth century was marked by the rise of the Purist controversy. The Purists maintained that to deny that God gave the New Testament in anything but pure classical Greek was to imperil the doctrine of inspiration. The Wittemberg Faculty, in 1638, decreed that to speak of barbarisms or solecisms in the New Testament was blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Hence, a correct conception of the peculiar idiom of the Apostles was impossible, and the estimate of different readings was seriously affected by this cause. Readings of existing editions were arbitrarily mingled, the manuscripts employed and the sources of variants adopted were not properly specified, and a full survey of the apparatus was impossible.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 505, n. 22.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 506.

<sup>96</sup>D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 71.

<sup>97</sup>M. R. Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1899) 94. Timothy J. Ralston of Dallas Seminary is to be credited with pointing out this quotation to me.

In other words, in the seventeenth century many evangelicals argued that the *Textus Receptus* was not inspired and that many of its readings were even “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.” They too had a myopic view of inerrancy, and they too poured their text-critical method through a dogmatic grid—but their conclusions were exactly the opposite of Borland’s!

Third, in letting his doctrinal position dictate the outcome of his textual criticism, Borland proves his own position wrong. There are plenty of passages far more troublesome to inerrancy than Matt 1:7 or Luke 23:45. In fact, these passages hardly constitute a serious difficulty.<sup>98</sup> To be consistent, Borland ought to advocate conjectural emendation wherever inerrancy seems to be in jeopardy. Who would not like a clean harmony between the two records of Judas’ demise, uniform parallel accounts of Peter’s threefold denial of Jesus, or an outright excision of the census by Quirinius? If Borland is unwilling to perform such radical surgery to the text under the guise of inerrancy, then why does he wave this doctrinal stick at significantly lesser problems? One can only suspect that inerrancy is not driving his decisions; rather, a preservation-majority connection is.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, we question whether it is an epistemologically sound principle to allow one’s presuppositions to dictate his text-critical methodology. It is our conviction that this is neither honest to a historical investigation nor fair to one’s evangelical heritage. If our faith cannot stand up to the scrutiny of rigorous investigation, then our beliefs need to be adjusted. But if we always jerk back the fideistic reins when the empirical horse goes too fast for us, then the charges of obscurantism, scholasticism, even pietistic dribble are well deserved. Borland believes that “unhappily our widely accepted textual-critical principles and practices may help to accommodate them in their jesting against the inerrancy of Scripture.”<sup>100</sup> But surely the jesting will be louder and stronger if we change the rules of the game because the other team is winning!

<sup>98</sup>All that needs to be noted is that variant spellings of proper names were in existence in the first century, as well as in the LXX (thus, “Asaph” and “Amos,” though unusual spellings, are hardly to be classified as errors); and, as Borland himself admits, ἐκλείπω with ἥλιος, though usually meaning “to eclipse,” does not always have this technical nuance. Nevertheless, Borland is quite right that both passages strike one as a bit peculiar. But if they strike us a little odd, then surely they did the same for the ancient scribes—who would have changed the text out of their own pietistic motives. What Borland simply cannot explain is how the Alexandrian readings arose in the first place, rendering them more probably original.

<sup>99</sup>Throughout his article Borland speaks of “the vast numerical superiority” of his preferred reading (“Negate Inerrancy,” 504). He concludes the article by saying, “In our quest for the true reading we must not confine ourselves to a few early MSS while forgetting the thousands of MSS that each bear an independent testimony to the text” (ibid., 506).

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 506.

## CONCLUSION

In many respects, the theological premise of the TR/MT proponents is commendable. Too many evangelicals have abandoned an aspect of the faith when the going gets tough. That certain students of the NT have held tenaciously to a theological argument concerning the text of the NT speaks highly of their piety and conviction. If their view were biblically founded, it would also speak highly of their orthodoxy. But, as we have seen, their theological *a priori* is neither biblically, nor logically, nor historically sound.

Concerning preservation, their underlying motive that the quest for certainty is identical with the quest for truth speaks volumes about their method. Their most self-defeating argument is that truth must be found in the majority—for not only does this contradict God's normal *modus operandi*, but it does not at all work for the Old Testament. Thus those who practice textual criticism by "majority rule" end up with a doctrine which promotes a bibliological double standard. At precisely this point they are out of step with orthodoxy, resembling more the ancient heretic Marcion in their view of the text.

Byzantine text advocates' arguments which are related more directly to inspiration and inerrancy also falter. Pickering's argument that loss of text falsifies inspiration is, once again, Marcionite (for there is loss of text in the OT), and his lone example—the longer ending of Mark—is irrelevant to anyone who thinks that the evangelist intentionally ended his Gospel at 16:8. Borland's argument is that the presuppositions of inerrancy must drive our text-critical methodology and that, consequently, only in the Byzantine text-type do we have an inerrant text. This view was found to be not only isolationist (in which inerrancy is defined only in twentieth century terms which are, moreover, not shared by the vast bulk of twentieth century inerrantists), not only inconsistent (otherwise he would have to appeal to conjectures wherever he felt the text erred), but also epistemologically, historically, and evangelically unsound.

In sum, there is no valid doctrinal argument for either the Textus Receptus or the majority text. A theological *a priori* has no place in textual criticism. That is not to say that the majority text is to be rejected outright. There may, in fact, be good arguments for the majority text which are not theologically motivated. But until TR/MT advocates make converts of those who do not share with them their peculiar views of preservation and inspiration, their theory must remain highly suspect.

## RECENT RESEARCH ON COL 1:15-20 (1980-1990)

LARRY R. HELYER

*Research on Col 1:15-20 during the decade of the 80s suggests that the consensus of the 60s and 70s regarding the genre, composition and religious background of the passage is collapsing. In particular, the view that the passage is a pre-Pauline hymn redacted by Paul or a Paulinist no longer prevails. In its place, recent scholarship posits a Pauline composition which could best be described as a poem. There is also a decided shift away from a gnosticising Hellenistic Judaism as the conceptual reservoir of the passage. Among evangelical scholars, a new consensus regarding the passage appears to be emerging.*

\* \* \*

SCHOLARLY study of Col 1:15-20 continues to be a lightning rod in New Testament research. The cosmic christology and the complex questions concerning genre, structure, religious background and function all contribute to the fascination of the passage.

The purview of this article is a survey of selected studies on Col 1:15-20 published during the decade of the 80s. The purpose is to discern what trends may be evident, to determine whether a consensus is emerging with respect to some of the exegetical conundrums and to identify any false trails from previous research.

### TWO CHALLENGES TO THE CONSENSUS

We begin with two studies published in 1979 because they raised serious questions about the direction of scholarship vis-à-vis Col 1:15-20 and challenged the consensus of the 60s and 70s. These studies were, in retrospect, bellwethers for research in the 80s.

In an article entitled "The Source of the Christology in Colossians," J. C. O'Neill denied a long-standing assumption in Colossian studies.<sup>1</sup> He cast doubt upon the theory that the author of Colossians

<sup>1</sup>NTS 26 (1979) 87-100.

was citing a pre-existent hymn.<sup>2</sup> This denied a well-nigh "assured result of critical study."<sup>3</sup>

We note first his arguments against the hymnic character of the passage. He observed that the technical terms in the passage are not uniformly employed—they have different meanings in the same composition. This seems highly unlikely for a hymn.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the passage fails to exhibit regular parallelism—there are too many inconsistencies.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, recourse to editorial insertions to salvage the presumed original structure lacks conviction. In such a procedure we are simply multiplying "hypotheses in order to save the original theory, and are in danger of pretending that the additional theories actually render the first hypothesis more likely rather than less likely."<sup>6</sup>

O'Neill did not, however, argue that the passage emanated from the hand of a single author. On the contrary, it betrayed a communal origin. Because words and expressions are resumed without subordination or connection, and because scarcely an expression in the passage bears the meaning it would have in ordinary speech, O'Neill concluded that we are dealing with "the language of public declaration."<sup>7</sup> Thus we have a passage which is confessional drawing upon the traditions of the community to which the author of Colossians belonged.<sup>8</sup> O'Neill was amenable to the notion of interpolations, but assigned them not to the author of the letter but to an unknown reactor "after the epistle left the author's hand."<sup>9</sup> O'Neill located the provenance of the tradition in Jewish circles which engaged in cosmological meditation. Consequently, the author of the letter, having his roots in that tradition, had taken it over but christianized it "believing that all had been fulfilled and completed in Jesus Christ."<sup>10</sup>

Whereas Frédéric Manns accepted the common view that the passage was a hymn, he drew attention to the unresolved question of how the hymn had been composed.<sup>11</sup> He noted features which betrayed the

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>3</sup>E.g., Ernst Käsemann's appraisal: "The hymnic character of Col 1:15–20 has long been recognized and generally acknowledged." "A Primitive Christian Baptismal," *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964) 149. Cf. also E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 41. R. P. Martin lists scholars who advanced the same thesis in "An Early Christian Hymn (Col. 1:15–20)," *EQ* 36 (1964) 200 n. 6.

<sup>4</sup>His example is ἀρχή (v. 18) and ἀρχαὶ (v. 16). O'Neill, "Source" 87.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 88–89.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 89, 94.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 95.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>11</sup>Frédéric Manns, "Col. 1, 15–20: Midrash Chrétien de Gen. 1, 1," *RevScRel* 53 (1979) 100–10.

influence of Jewish exegetical techniques, such as the repetition of units organized into groups of threes and sevens; plays on the different meanings a word can bear, as in the gradation ἐν αὐτῷ, δι' αὐτοῦ, εἰς αὐτὸν representing three possible translations of the Hebrew particle (ב); and, more importantly, the exposition of the possible meanings of ראשית (beginning). This latter observation assumes that the author of our passage drew upon Gen 1:1: "In the beginning (בראשית) God created the heavens and the earth," and identified the ראשית as Jesus Christ by means of Prov 8:22: "The Lord brought me forth as the first (ראשית) of his works." Manns marshalled evidence for this hypothesis by citing various passages in the Targums and Palestinian Midrashim in which the Wisdom of Prov 8:22 was equated with the ראשית of Gen 1:1. Thus the Christian author of our passage, using Jewish midrashic techniques, transfers to Jesus what had in Jewish tradition been ascribed to God's wisdom. In so doing, the author developed four different senses in which Jesus is the ראשית: he is the first appearance (πρὸ πάντων), the head (κεφαλῇ), the beginning (ἀρχή), and the first fruits (πρωτότοκος).<sup>12</sup> In all of this Manns acknowledged his indebtedness to the work of C. F. Burney who had suggested a similar explanation for the composition of the passage back in 1925.<sup>13</sup>

Manns did break new ground in more narrowly specifying the *Sitz im Leben* of the hymn in the Jewish Passover liturgy. He drew attention to four motifs which the hymn shares with Pascal terminology: (1) the antecedent context of the hymn stressing the theme of redemption in language reminiscent of the Exodus (1:13); (2) the notion of an eschatological new creation (Cf. *1 Enoch* 91:14–15; *Jub.* 1:29; *Pesiq. R.* 34:2); (3) the theme of blood connected to reconciliation and peace; and finally, (4) the mention of the firstborn from the dead. According to Manns, these motifs all underlay the Pascal "poem of the four nights" and were taken up and christianized by the author of Col 1:15–20 by connecting them to the blood of Jesus' cross and his resurrection.<sup>14</sup> For Manns, in contrast to O'Neill, we are dealing with a single author whose pre-Christian religious background was more nearly that of Palestinian Judaism.

O'Neill and Manns, respectively, challenged the scholarly consensus at the end of the 70s that we have (1) a hymnic composition and (2) that the religious background of the passage derives from Hellenistic Judaism, with possible gnosticizing tendencies, redacted by Paul or a Paulinist. These two lonely voices in 1979 would be joined by a chorus at the end of the 80s.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 101–5.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 101. Burney's article was "Christ as the APXH of Creation: Pr 8, 22, Col 1, 15.18, Rev 3, 14," *JTS* 27 (1925–26) 160–77. Burney's view was endorsed by W. D. Davies in his *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: S.P.C.K. 1948) 150–52.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 105–7.

## BEASLEY-MURRAY AND KYRIOS CHRISTOLOGY

In a 1980 article Paul Beasley-Murray followed in the train of those who held that Col 1:15–20 is an early Christian hymn cited and adapted by Paul in light of the Colossian errorists.<sup>15</sup> He also concurred with Eduard Schweizer and R. P. Martin that we have a three-strophe hymn, the middle strophe being of special importance. This intermediate strophe bound together the two realms of creation and redemption and thus served as the focus of the entire composition.<sup>16</sup> Only three Pauline interpolations were acknowledged: the expansion of the “all things” in vv. 16a–c and 20c; the affirmation in 18c of Christ’s supremacy in everything; and the grounding of reconciliation in the cross in v. 20b.<sup>17</sup>

For the most part Beasley-Murray located the conceptual reservoir of the hymn in a Christian interpretation of several Old Testament passages. Although he acknowledged that v. 15 may allude to wisdom christology, Beasley-Murray thought that Gen 1:26 provided a better fit in that the ideas of “image” and “domination” were precisely the focus of the hymnic assertion.<sup>18</sup>

The “firstborn” predication of v. 15 likewise derived from the OT notion of pre-eminence as seen in Exod 4:22 and Ps 89:27; however, Beasley-Murray included temporal priority since the latter clearly is involved in the parallel expression “firstborn from among the dead” in v. 18.<sup>19</sup> Another key Old Testament text was Ps 67(68):16 (LXX): εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς κατοικεῖν ἐν αὐτῷ (i.e., Mt. Zion). The notion of God dwelling in his temple provided the background of the debated term πλήρωμα in v. 19 rather than any connection to Gnosticism or Stoic philosophy.<sup>20</sup> Beasley-Murray stoutly resisted the notion that the pre-Pauline hymn was couched in terms of a world body concept of which Christ was the head.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, in only one place did he admit that the hymn borrowed from popular philosophy and that was in the phrase “all things hold together in him” (v. 17b). Even here, however, he asserted that the meaning is more the active idea of “putting back together” and thus the Jewish-Christian notion of reconciliation which leads into the third strophe.

In short, Beasley-Murray attributed the genesis of the hymn to a fundamental *Kyrios* christology—the Lordship of Jesus Christ was the central affirmation. This Lordship was affirmed in Adamic categories

<sup>15</sup>“An Early Christian Hymn Celebrating the Lordship of Christ,” *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F. F. Bruce on His 70th Birthday* (eds. Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 169–83, esp. 169.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 169–70.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 180–82.



of image and dominion and augmented by the motif of the indwelling and redeeming God. Though perhaps influenced by earlier Jewish speculation about Wisdom and Adam, the driving force behind the hymn lay in the distinctly Christian confession: Jesus is Lord.<sup>22</sup>

#### DUNN AND POLLARD: REDEFINING COSMIC CHRISTOLOGY

James D. G. Dunn's *Christology in the Making* appeared in 1980.<sup>23</sup> This substantial investigation into the origins of the doctrine of incarnation devoted some seven pages to an examination of our passage. He accepted the verdict that this was a pre-Pauline hymn redacted "without too much modification."<sup>24</sup> He opted for a basic two-strophe arrangement in which protology and eschatology were the principal topics respectively.<sup>25</sup> As to background, Dunn cast doubt upon Adam christology in the first strophe because the notion of creation in, by and for Christ had no counterpart. He concluded that the description of Christ in the first clause was "very much that of Wisdom."<sup>26</sup> Thus the circles from which such a hymn arose would most likely be Hellenistic Jewish Christian.

The most significant and provocative aspect of Dunn's study was his hermeneutical approach to the affirmations about Christ in the passage. He maintained that the attributions should be understood as ways of expressing the early Christian belief that God's creative activity and redemptive activity were connected. Thus according to Dunn the early Christians were not really saying that Christ was the actual agent of creation or that he actually was a pre-existent being, but that they now recognize in Christ the embodiment and definition of God's power which was once active in creation as it is now active in redemption.<sup>27</sup> This is disappointing coming from one whose roots are in evangelicalism. Such an approach seems to be a form of de-mythologizing and violates Dunn's own excellent guidelines for doing biblical theology as he outlined them in the first chapter of his book.<sup>28</sup>

T. E. Pollard offered a "reconsideration" of Col 1:12–20 in a 1981 study.<sup>29</sup> By-passing the questions of genre and structure (he refers to the passage as a hymn), he devoted his attention to the same question as Manns, namely, how the passage was composed. For Pollard the so-called cosmology was really subordinated by the context to the chief

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 179.

<sup>23</sup>James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry Into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980).

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 188.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 194.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 9–10.

<sup>29</sup>"Colossians 1.12–20: A Reconsideration," *NTS* 27 (1981) 572–75.

concern which was the fact of redemption. This soteriological focus, which characterizes Paul's christological statements elsewhere (Cf. 1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:6-11), determined the meaning of the hymn, whatever its original meaning may have been.<sup>30</sup>

As to the genesis of the original hymn, Pollard seemed sympathetic to C. F. Burney's thesis that we have a rabbinic-style exegesis of **בראשית**, even though he was aware that many scholars dismissed it. He observed, however, that virtually all scholars agree that below the surface of the passage lies the figure of Wisdom.<sup>31</sup> This led Pollard to the observation that Paul clearly identified Christ as Wisdom in 1 Cor 1:24. Might it not be, he concluded, that Paul was giving an exegesis of 1 Cor 1:24 and 8:6 in Col 1:15ff.? Be that as it may, Pollard continued, what is demonstrable is an interweaving of several themes which is typical of both Rabbinic and Philonic exegesis. This configuration of ideas—Wisdom, Torah, Adam, and Israel—all linked together and christianized provides the best explanation for how the passage originated. Thus Christ superseded and realized fully all that these notions had originally meant in Jewish faith and thought.<sup>32</sup> Pollard's view of the genesis of the hymn is thus close to Mann's, though not as restrictive in the scope of the Jewish background.

We would add that Pollard's interpretation of the language of pre-existence is also close to that of Dunn. In this regard Pollard cited with approval Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's contention that the meaning of such language is that Christ "represents the divine intent which came to historical expression in the creation of Adam."<sup>33</sup> Apparently Pollard understands the language of pre-existence in functional rather than ontological terms.

#### STUDIES FAVORING PAULINE AUTHORSHIP OF THE ENTIRE PASSAGE

A major commentary on Colossians written by an evangelical scholar, Peter T. O'Brien, appeared in 1982.<sup>34</sup> While acknowledging that Col 1:15-20 was a pre-Pauline hymn, O'Brien also broadened the category to include confessional, liturgical, polemical or doxological material. He preferred to label the passage as "a traditional hymnic piece."<sup>35</sup> With regard to structure, he noted that no consensus had yet emerged on the number and content of the stanzas.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 573.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 575.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 574. citing *Becoming Human Together* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1977) 48.

<sup>34</sup>*Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1982).

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 32, 33.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 35.

On the question of background, he reviewed and refuted the pre-Christian Gnostic thesis of Käsemann.<sup>37</sup> He also surveyed the approach of C. F. Burney and concluded that “although Burney’s detailed argument may be open to question, his drawing attention to Old Testament parallels which clearly lie close at hand—rather than some uncertain parallels which have been claimed in Gnosticism, Stoicism and elsewhere—is commendable.”<sup>38</sup> O’Brien acknowledged the probable influence of wisdom speculation in Hellenistic Judaism upon the formulation of the passage. He rejected, however, Eduard Schweizer’s version of this approach whereby the author of Colossians felt compelled to redact the orientation of the hymn so that it reflected a theology of the cross.<sup>39</sup>

O’Brien’s own view took seriously Pauline authorship and accepted either that Paul drew upon a composition of his own or that the passage was a *de novo* work in exalted hymnic style.<sup>40</sup> He also inclined to Seyoon Kim’s thesis that Paul’s wisdom christology was rooted more in the Damascus Road experience than in the Hellenistic Jewish wisdom theology of a Philo or of the Wisdom of Solomon.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to Dunn’s work, O’Brien argued for Christ’s actual pre-existence. In O’Brien’s words: “As the first title of majesty, ‘image’ emphasizes Christ’s relation to God. The term points to his revealing of the Father on the one hand and his pre-existence on the other—it is both functional and ontological.”<sup>42</sup>

Janusz Frankowski (1983) queried the various criteria which scholars advanced for the identification of preexisting hymns in the NT.<sup>43</sup> He expressed a preference for regarding certain hymnic texts as compositions of the author of the works in which they appear.<sup>44</sup> Frankowski also insisted that one must closely analyze the individual parts of the hymnic text in order to detect possible dependency upon other compositions with regard to form and content.<sup>45</sup> He observed that when this is done for Col 1:14–20 and Heb 1:2b–4, we discover that “each author approaches the theme and formulates its expression in his own manner.”<sup>46</sup> This led him to conclude that “in many other cases where there is talk of [a] hymn being quoted, we are in reality dealing with texts drawing upon existing themes but written in the form in which we find

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 41, 42.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>43</sup>“Early Christian Hymns Recorded in the New Testament: A Reconsideration of the Question in the light of Heb 1, 3,” *BZ* 27 (1983) 183–94.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 184.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 188.

them in the New Testament by the authors of those respective works."<sup>47</sup> The process which Frankowski envisioned was one in which familiar and traditional themes were borrowed and reworked by the pneumatic author in a poetic manner. He concluded his article with a rather pointed critique of the hitherto prevailing consensus:

... we are under the impression that in many cases where exegetes today claim to have discovered in the NT writing early Christian hymns being quoted and try to restore them to their original form—by eliminating some elements and adding others—they are doing once again precisely what were doing the NT writers [sic]: they are simply composing their own hymns.<sup>48</sup>

The present writer entered the debate with an article in *JETS* in 1983.<sup>49</sup> Whereas the thesis that the passage was a hymn was provisionally accepted, attention was also called to the disarray concerning arrangement, number of strophes and possible interpolations. With some caution the article opted for a three-strophe arrangement.<sup>50</sup> My main objective was to argue for the Pauline authorship of the entire passage. Responding to arguments of unusual vocabulary, lack of personal allusions in the passage, alleged differences in christology from Pauline theologumena, supposed liturgical settings and the unlikelihood that prison circumstances permitted the production of such an exacting and artfully constructed piece, I attempted to demonstrate the inadequacy of the above criteria to overturn what is still the decisive observation on the whole question. The theology of the passage "is so compatible with and adducible from uncontestably Pauline thought that the best hypothesis is also the simplest: Paul is the author."<sup>51</sup>

As to the religious background, Wisdom and Adam speculation account for some of the verbal parallels. As a comprehensive explanation for the hymn as we have it, however, one must resort to *Kyrios* christology whereby Christ assumes the predicates and prerogatives of Yahweh in the Old Testament. Parallels from the hymnic literature of Psalms strengthened this assertion. In sum, cosmic christology was implicit from the beginning of the primitive church by virtue of the

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 191.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 194.

<sup>49</sup>Larry R. Helyer, "Colossians 1:15–20: Pre-Pauline or Pauline?" *JETS* 26 (1983) 167–79.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 168–70.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 172. This position was also argued by Pierre Benoit "L'Hymne Christologique de Col 1.15–20," *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty* (ed. J. Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1975) 226. Frankowski's article was unavailable to me at the time though his approach was similar to mine.

resurrection.<sup>52</sup> Paul Beasley-Murray, it will be remembered, had also argued for the importance of *Kyrios* christology.

#### A REDACTION CRITICAL TOUR DE FORCE

1983 also witnessed a major study of our passage which headed in an entirely different direction. Cesare Marcheselli Casale, by means of structural and redactional analysis, laid out an elaborate four-stage development of Col 1:15–20.<sup>53</sup> The earliest stage he attributed to an early Christian, pre-Pauline community which produced a two-strophe hymn in the abc:a'b'c' pattern.

- a v.15a He is the image of God,
- b v.15b The firstborn of the entire creation,
- c v.16a for in him all things were created.
  
- a' v.18b He is the Beginning,
- b' v.18c the firstborn of the dead,
- c' v.19 for God desired to dwell in him with his entire fullness.

His arguments in support of the above scheme were threefold: unusual vocabulary, compact literary unity, and a metrical structure with assonance designed as a mnemonic aid. The origin of this hymn was in the liturgy of the Colossian community which celebrated the cosmic primacy of Jesus.<sup>54</sup>

The second stage of development was an equally compact and concise textual unit which, on the basis of context, was identified as Hellenistic-Jewish. It consisted of the following:

- v.16b All things that are in heaven and all things that are in earth
- c the visible and the invisible
- d thrones and dominions
- e Powers and authorities
- v.20b not only all things on earth but also all things in heaven
- v.15a of the invisible

Casale linked this material to Hellenistic views such as Philo which betray a Platonic influence. The redactor of the hymn incorporated this Hellenistic-Jewish tradition into the hymn.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 172–77.

<sup>53</sup>"Der Christologische Hymnus: Kol 1, 15–20 im Dienste Der Versöhnung und Des Friedens," *Teresianum* 40 (1989) 3–21. Italian original *RivB* 31 (1983).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 5, 6.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 7, 8.

The third stage comprised the following:

- 16f All things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon earth
- 17a And he is before all creation
  - b and in him all things have existence
- 18a And he is the head of the body.
  - d in order to have the preeminence in all things.
- 20a God was pleased through him to reconcile to himself all things
- 20b.1 through him who has established peace
  - b.2 through him

This stage, which stood as an independent unit joined by parataxis and which harmonized the earlier stages Casale traced to Pauline teaching.<sup>56</sup>

The fourth and final stage comprised the following parts of verses:

- 18a the church
- 18c from the dead
- 20b.1 through the blood of the cross

Here we have from the hand of Paul himself some modifications which brought the content in line with the Pauline kerygma. Thus we have, according to Casale, an important indication how the early church of Colossae—perhaps with the consent of Paul—had taken over and reformulated elements of the Christian culture of that time. Casale's approach might be considered a highly nuanced variation of O'Neill's thesis. According to Casale, the end result is a "considerable redactional achievement."<sup>57</sup>

#### F. F. BRUCE: CAUTIOUS AND CONSERVATIVE

In 1984 F. F. Bruce contributed two works on Colossians, an updated volume on Colossians in *The New International Commentary* series and an article in *Bibliotheca Sacra*. We will use the latter as the basis for our discussion.<sup>58</sup> Bruce was cautious about the genre question. He acknowledged that the passage might be a hymn.<sup>59</sup> With regard to authorship, he thought that more probably the hymn was composed in the circle of the Pauline churches. In any case, the content was agreeable to Paul.<sup>60</sup> On the question of structure he favored two-strophes with a transitional link (vv. 17–18a) in agreement with

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>58</sup>F. F. Bruce, "The 'Christ Hymn' of Colossians 1:15–20," *Bib Sac* 141 (1984) 99–111.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 99, 100, 105.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 100, 105.

Benoit.<sup>61</sup> As to the background, Bruce singled out the influence of Old Testament Wisdom teaching, the impact of Paul's conversion experience, the OT teaching in Ps 89:27 whereby the son of David is equated with "firstborn of the kings," and Genesis one.<sup>62</sup> While he acknowledged affinities to Stoic terminology, Stoicism was not the real tap root of the hymn. Bruce also strongly resisted the notion that the original hymn spoke of the cosmic body glossed by Paul as the Church.<sup>63</sup> In his words, "there is no good reason to suppose that the hymn at any stage bore a different meaning from what it bears in the context of the Letter to the Colossians."<sup>64</sup> Bruce's views are at considerable distance from those of Casale and are very close to those of Peter O'Brien; indeed, the latter was a student of Bruce's at Manchester.

#### HYMN HYPOTHESIS UNDER ASSAULT

In 1985 two more evangelical scholars made significant contributions to the scholarly study of Col 1:15–20, one in Great Britain and the other in the United States. John F. Balchin, writing in *Vox Evangelica*, attacked head-on the consensus that the passage is a hymn.<sup>65</sup> His conclusion was forthrightly stated:

We have no actual parallel anywhere in ancient literature, Christian, Jewish or pagan, which justifies our using the description of 'hymn' for the passage as it stands, or for any of its scholarly redactions. We are actually ignorant of the ground-rules of early Christian liturgy. We cannot even demonstrate that there was any fixity of form as early as this letter.<sup>66</sup>

Balchin's article is a meticulous critique of the various arguments used to support the hymn hypothesis.

1. The stylistic argument that an author does not appreciably alter his/her style from one work to another lacks conviction and evidence.<sup>67</sup>
2. The parallelism of the passage demonstrates not a perfectly balanced hymnic structure but a Semitic mind influenced by the parallelism of the OT. Thus, the excessive terms in the present passage which destroy a precise parallelism require interpolation and excision theories in order to salvage the hypothesis.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 100, n. 2.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 100, 101.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>65</sup>John F. Balchin, "Colossians 1:15–20: An Early Christian Hymn? The Arguments from Style," *Vox Evangelica* 15 (1985) 65–94.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 68.

3. The so-called introductory formulae are not clear indicators of quoted material, but quite consistent with Pauline usage elsewhere in which there is no question of any liturgical connotation.<sup>69</sup>
4. The argument from unusual or rare vocabulary falls considerably short of demonstration. All the words in our passage except ἀποκαταλλάξαι are found in the NT, LXX or were widely used in the NT era. The latter term may well be a Pauline coinage.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, as Balchin notes:

The real weakness of arguments based on words which are *hapax legomena* is the fact that our New Testament is only a partial collection of the occasional writings of its authors. In spite of the extent of Paul's work, we have no exhaustive, definitive Pauline vocabulary.<sup>71</sup>

5. Balchin examined the assumptions underlying other criteria for detection of hymns such as: contextual dislocation, christological content, syllable counts, strophic arrangement and chiasmic structure. In each case he concluded that the evidence appealed to may more easily fit alternative explanations.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, he showed that the hymn hypothesis can only sustain itself when one invokes interpolations by the writer of the letter. But if this is so, why would Paul bother to cite something which required him to make such radical alterations? According to Balchin, "this is a question which has either not been asked, or has never been satisfactorily answered by those who argue for an edited hymn."<sup>73</sup> In this we hear the echoes of O'Neill's earlier work. Finally, with regard to chiasmic arrangement, Balchin acknowledged that Paul, doubtless owing to his Old Testament background, did employ chiasm in some of his writings. He was skeptical, however, that Col 1:15–20 was so constructed.<sup>74</sup>

It is precisely the issue of chiasm which Balchin's counterpart, Steven Baugh took up in his study which appeared in the *Westminster Theological Journal*.<sup>75</sup> Baugh's argument may be set out as follows:

1. The existing text does not possess the characteristics of modern hymns. Baugh prefers the designation "poem."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 69, 70.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 72, 73.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 74–86.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>75</sup>Steven M. Baugh, "The Poetic Form of Col 1:15–20," *WTJ* 47 (1985) 227–44.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 217.



2. Paul spontaneously composed the passage. 1 Cor 13 and Rom 11:33–36, unquestionably Pauline, likewise display exalted poetry involving chiasms.<sup>77</sup>
3. The structure of the poem consists of an intricate chiasm in which a xyz/x'z'y' inner structure is encased within an over-arching ABC-B'A' pattern. Such a variation of the second member of the inner set has Old Testament exemplars.<sup>78</sup>
4. The focus of the poem is the C element in v. 17b: "And all things continue to exist in him." In this he agreed with and acknowledged the work of Paul Beasley-Murray.<sup>79</sup>
5. He concluded that "it is fitting that a poem inspired by the torrent of the revelation of God in Christ Jesus should follow the poetic wadi carved out by the Old Covenant revelation."<sup>80</sup>

## A NEW SYNTHESIS

1986 saw the publication of Nicholas Wright's commentary on Colossians and Philemon. In 1990 he followed this up with a more specialized study of Col 1:15–20. We will consider these together.<sup>81</sup>

On the genre question, Wright followed the tack of O'Neill, Frankowski, Balchin and Baugh in denying that we have a hymn *per se*. He preferred the designation "poem."<sup>82</sup> He argued that the theology of the poem as a whole accords best with Pauline authorship.<sup>83</sup> As to structure, Wright followed closely Baugh's chiastic arrangement and did not delete any words or phrases as Pauline interpolations or additions.<sup>84</sup>

Wright critiqued the Gnostic redeemer-myth and the Jewish Wisdom hypothesis as inadequate to account for the poem *as a whole*.<sup>85</sup> He saw the matrix of the hymn as mainline Jewish monotheism. The pattern observable in the hymn crops up in many Psalms (as I had pointed out earlier) and in the structure of the Pentateuch as well as Isaiah 40–55, namely, creation-redemption.<sup>86</sup> Thus the wisdom-traditions, according to Wright, even in their apocalyptic developments, function within the broader context of Jewish monotheism.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 228, n. 6

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 231–39.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 237.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>81</sup>N. T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) and "Poetry and Theology in Colossians 1.15–20," *NTS* 36 (1990) 444–68.

<sup>82</sup>*Colossians*, 64; "Poetry," 444.

<sup>83</sup>"Poetry," 464.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 445–48.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 451, 452.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 452.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 454–55.

Interestingly, Wright, as had Manns and Pollard, refurbished C. F. Burney's thesis in explaining how the poem was composed. Wright showed that Burney overlooked the importance of ἀρχή (18c) and failed to appreciate the significance of εἰκὼν despite its appearance in Gen 1:26; Wis 7:26 and Col 1:15a. Taking these two terms into account we have the following possible meanings of ראשית which provided the skeleton for the entire poem:

- A He is the image-the firstborn
- B He is supreme
- B He is the Head
- A He is the beginning

Thus we have a chiastic structure (as argued by Baugh) in which the four meanings correspond to the four parts of the poem.<sup>88</sup> Wright further argued that the weight of the above sequence fell on the last term ἀρχή which drew attention to the climatic part of the poem, namely, the creation of a new people of God through the cross and resurrection of Jesus. In short, Wright claimed that "Burney's basic insight was indeed sound. . . ."<sup>89</sup>

In contrast to Dunn and Pollard, who fell short of ascribing an ontological pre-existence to Christ, Wright countered with a carefully nuanced position. He agreed with Dunn and Pollard that the εἰκὼν title in v. 15a referred to the risen and exalted man Jesus, but that in no way ruled out his being God's agent in creation *before* he assumed his human nature.<sup>90</sup>

#### THE NEW HISTORY OF RELIGIONS APPROACH TO COL 1:15-20

Our last researcher is Jarl Fossum (1989).<sup>91</sup> Fossum apparently accepted the designation of "hymn" for our passage.<sup>92</sup> He was not really concerned with the authorship question and contended that the issue was not relevant to his paper.<sup>93</sup> Fossum accepted a two-stanza structure although he voiced some concern for the rather subjective nature of all such attempts to arrange the passage into strophes.<sup>94</sup>

Fossum's article focused on the history-of-religions background. He acknowledged that Käsemann's Gnostic Urmensch-Erlöser had

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 456-57.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 458.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 461.

<sup>91</sup>Jarl Fossum, "Colossians 1.15-18a in the Light of Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism," *NTS* 35 (1989) 183-201.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 183-85.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

fallen on hard times.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, an Adam christology failed to provide a complete explanation because "Adam is said to have been made *in* or *after* God's image; he is not that image."<sup>96</sup> He likewise found Sophia-Christology as in Wis 7:26 wanting because it too did not precisely equate Sophia with the image of God—in the latter instance Sophia was said to be an image of God's (perfect) goodness, which, according to Fossum, "is not the same thing."<sup>97</sup> Appeal to Philo's Sophia-Logos descriptions were also inadequate because "Philo's intermediary is recognized to be a highly complex figure, and so we would have to ask whether Philo actually testifies to the same tradition as that found in the Gnostic texts."<sup>98</sup> On this basis Fossum proposed to reinvestigate the Gnostic traditions to see if we might find a more adequate explanation for this terminology.

Fossum then conducted an interesting foray through various Jewish and Gnostic sources. A presupposition which guided this search was that "Gnosticism was not only roughly contemporary with infant Christianity; it also had arisen out of the same matrix. It thus stands to reason that the New Testament is found to contain terms and motifs which have equivalents in Gnostic texts."<sup>99</sup> Irenaeus' account of Satornil of the school of Simon Magus provided a starting-point. Here we have the body of man made by the angels as the "shining image" or "likeness" of God. This was compared to the Nag Hammadi tractate *Orig. World* where a similar teaching occurs.<sup>100</sup> This in turn was compared to Jewish Kabbalistic texts. Fossum drew this all together in the following synthesis:

Kabbalism can be viewed as a revival of mythology on Jewish soil. In this respect, however, Kabbalism was preceded by Gnosticism by centuries, for in Gnosticism, too, the mythology which was suppressed by Pharisaic Rabbinism crops up again. The same mythology would seem to have played a role in the formation of certain New Testament terms and themes, and it may be right to relate the conception of Christ as the 'image of the invisible God' to the Gnostic (and Jewish mystical) hypostatization of the divine image in Gen 1:26.<sup>101</sup>

To the above, a wide range of sources—some early, some late—were canvassed. These include snippets from *Exagoge* (Ezekiel the Tragedian), Aristobulus (fragment preserved by Eusebius), *The Prayer of Joseph*

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 183.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 187.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 184.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 186, 187.

(preserved by Origen), the *Visions of Ezekiel*, *Ma'aseh Merkabah*, *Teach. Silv.*, *Eugnostos*, *Gos. Eg.*, *Poimandres*, *Abot R. Nat.*, *Shi'ur Qomah*, *2 Enoch* and the *Book of Elchasai* all of which are drawn upon to illustrate some facet of the hymn in Col 1:15–18a.<sup>102</sup> Fossum concluded that “the hymn actually seems to bear witness to an Anthropos-Christology rather than a Sophia-Christology.”<sup>103</sup>

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We now summarize our survey. Clearly the consensus of the 60s and 70s came under heavy assault during the 80s and crumbled. In its place, among mainline scholars, exists a rather wide spectrum of opinion and hypothesis. Increasingly, scholars of all stripes are casting doubt on the designation of “hymn” for our passage. The confidence with which many reconstructed and rearranged the putative hymn has been replaced by many with caution or skepticism, although a few push the methodological limitations of redaction criticism to a point calling into question the credibility of the entire enterprise (e.g. Casale).

Among evangelicals, however, something more like a consensus seems to be emerging. On the question of genre, though some still accept the category of hymn, the trend appears to be toward a more broad classification like “poem.” Furthermore, a consensus appears to support the notion of Pauline authorship for the entire passage. This does not appear to proceed from an *a priori* assumption that such a position is required by a high view of Scripture, but rather, it simply accords best with the evidence. Support also seems to be growing for the recognition of a deliberate chiasmic structure.

There also seems to be increasing agreement that Paul’s cosmic christology is rooted in the OT teaching of a creator-redeemer God and Paul’s personal encounter with Jesus the Lord on the Damascus Road. These fundamental data, however, may well have been facilitated in expression by Adam and Wisdom theology mediated through first century Judaism. In any case, we have the theology of Paul before us in this incomparable passage.

Finally, there also appears to be increasing support among evangelical (and even some mainline) scholars for the older view of C. F. Burney that the passage represents a midrashic interpretation of Gen 1:1 by means of Prov 8:22. In my opinion N. T. Wright’s reformulation and restatement of Burney’s thesis is quite convincing. I would now identify my own view with that position.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 190–201.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 201.

In retrospect, Eduard Norden's form critical analysis in 1913 and Ernst Lohmeyer's further elaboration in 1930 leading to the conclusion that we have an early Christian hymn in Col 1:15-20 has been a red herring which has drawn attention away from the main task at hand. Enormous time and energy have been expended in the vain attempt to recover, rearrange and explain the original hymn and its background. All the while, attention should have been placed on the content of this passage as the profound culmination of the Apostle Paul's theology—cosmic christology.



## THE SOTERIOLOGY OF JAMES 2:14

GALE Z. HEIDE

*In the contemporary debate concerning salvific essentials, James 2:14 has served as a focal point for discussion. In the following study, the endeavor is made to allow the context of James to provide the key indicators on how saving faith should here be understood. The eternal ramifications of James 2:14 are most evident when the intent of James is discussed as it relates to the audience he has in mind. James is not merely concerned with some type of temporal blessing in 2:14. Instead, he is burdened over the very eternal existence of some people who are in his pastoral care.*

\* \* \*

IN times past, the book of James has become the subject of significant debate (such as in the time of Martin Luther), but by and large, it has been passed over in favor of "more theological" or "more important" books with respect to the Christian faith. This is an unfortunate thing to say of any book, and especially of one so close to the pulse of the early church. There has, however, been an awakening of sorts lately as to the vitality of the book of James. Unfortunately, this awakening is largely due to a theological debate in contemporary evangelical circles that centers in part around the interpretation of one particular passage in James, namely James 2:14. This debate is often called, among other things, the "Lordship salvation" controversy. It relates directly to the understanding of the relationship between salvation and sanctification. Within this debate, there are often appeals made to a given understanding of how James views the relationship, or defines the substance, of salvation and sanctification. Underlying many of these appeals are varying assumptions as to the interpretation of certain passages.

Amidst the many references made to the book of James in the debate, specific exegetical explanation is seldom given for the understanding espoused. Instead, the reader is presumed upon to accept the assumptions that underlie the interpretation being set forth. In light of this, the question must be raised whether the assumptions being made in relation to James 2:14 are in fact valid. It is the intention of this

paper to expose such assumptions and critique them in an endeavor to come to a clearer understanding of just what is the author's intended meaning in this text.

#### I. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The specific issue to be addressed here centers around the intended meaning of the verb σώζω—"to save"—in 2:14. The first half of this study will endeavor to develop a clear understanding of James 2:14. We will first discuss the various options of meaning for the verb σώζω by itself, and next discuss the context that surrounds 2:14. Following this, we shall undertake to relate the meaning of the word within the surrounding context. Much of this process has clearly been done for us and is available in various commentaries and journal articles.<sup>1</sup> However, the theological dynamic in James' use of σώζω is regularly given little more attention than a brief definition, if mentioned at all, in most contemporary studies.<sup>2</sup> The intention of this section in the study is to build upon and draw together what has been written, and at the same time develop a logically coherent understanding of 2:14 that agrees exegetically with the thought of James in the

<sup>1</sup>There is a long-standing tradition, which this study delineates in further detail in the paragraphs below, concerning the interpretation of this passage as is best represented by the following authors: James B. Adamson, *James: The Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles: James* (trans. and ed. John Owen; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), Peter H. Davids, *Commentary on James* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), John P. Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: James-Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of Hebrews and James* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1946), Thomas Manton, *An Exposition of the Epistle of James* (Evansville: Sovereign Grace, 1962), Ralph P. Martin, *James* (WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1988), James B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), Douglas J. Moo, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), and James H. Ropes, *Epistle of St. James* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916).

There are also various journal articles worth mentioning that have developed the salvation theme of James 2:14 in some fashion. They are best represented by the following authors: Christoph Burchard, "Zu Jakobus 2:14-26," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 71/1/2 (1980) 27-45, William Dyrness, "Mercy triumphs over justice: James 2:13 and the theology of faith and works," *Themelios* 6/3 (April, 1981) 11-16, Simon J. Kistemaker, "The Theological Message of James," *JETS* 29/1 (March, 1986) 55-61, John F. MacArthur, Jr., "Faith According to the Apostle James," *JETS* 33/1 (March, 1990) 13-34, John Polhill, "Prejudice, Partiality, and Faith: James 2," *RevExp* 83/3 (Summer, 1986) 395-404, Robert V. Rakestraw, "James 2:14-26: Does James contradict Pauline Soteriology?" *Criswell Theological Review* 1/1 (Fall, 1986) 31-50, and Michael J. Townsend, "Christ, Community, and Salvation in the Epistle of James," *EvQ* 53/2 (April-June, 1981) 115-23.

<sup>2</sup>While not true of every study, many relied on generally accepted definitions and rarely made any attempt to support the definitions in detail. There were a number of references given in support, but unfortunately, the studies often simply referred to each other.



context of the book. This seems to be an especially urgent task in light of the recent debate concerning the understanding of this passage.<sup>3</sup>

The latter half of the study will deal directly with those who are opposed to the traditional interpretation of James 2:14, which understands James to be speaking of eternal salvation, by answering some of the objections they have made to this author's understanding of the text. Such a response has not been given any legitimate consideration in previous studies dealing with the theological development of James 2:14. In the past, the articles attempting to deal with this issue have given, at best, brief mention of the variant view, which understands James to be speaking of a very temporal salvation. That is, there seems to have been little effort given to deal with the variant interpretation in full.<sup>4</sup> This author's study is intended to fill the ever widening gap. The discussion set forth in this latter section will provide the reader with the much needed construction of a response to the variant view causing such great contention regarding the book of James.

Some of the questions that ultimately need to be answered in such a study are these: What is the meaning of  $\sigma\acute{o}\zeta\omega$ ? From what is the person in question to be saved? How are works related to this salvation? How is faith related to this salvation? What type of faith is in view? All these and more will be answered or given reasonable consideration in the following discussion, while focusing attention primarily on the meaning of  $\sigma\acute{o}\zeta\omega$  within its context in James 2:14.

<sup>3</sup>It may be worthwhile to note that there is relatively small representation of those who have objected in written form to the view of James as it is understood in this study. The only major interpretive statements available are sections in Zane Hodges' *The Gospel Under Siege* (Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1981) and *Absolutely Free* (Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1989), and the brief booklet *'Dead Faith' What is It? A Study on James 2:14-26* (Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1987) by the same author. Earl D. Radmacher seems to be advocating the same position in his brief article "First Response to 'Faith According to the Apostle James' by John F. MacArthur, Jr.," *JETS* 33/1 (March, 1990) 35-41. There is also a brief outline of a view similar to Hodges' in R. T. Kendall's *Once Saved, Always Saved* (Chicago: Moody, 1985) 207-17. However, there are many who would agree with the objections at a more popular level. For these reasons it is crucial that we answer all the objections arising to the view of this study, but it is nonetheless unfortunate that they are not represented by more substantial documentation.

<sup>4</sup>Most major works on James have not attempted a response. This is somewhat understandable since the few articles that do attend to the issue are mainly book reviews which mention the view only in passing. The most complete of these is William G. Bjork, "A Critique of Zane Hodges' *The Gospel Under Siege*, A review Article," *JETS* 30/4 (December, 1987) 457-60. Others that also mention the issue are Johnny V. Miller, "Book Reviews," *Trinity Journal* 4NS/1 (Spring, 1983) 94, and R. F. White, "Book Reviews," *WTJ* 46/2 (Fall, 1984) 428. The one possible exception is the response of MacArthur, who does give a brief rebuttal of Hodges (MacArthur, "Faith" 28-32). However, he does not deal with Hodges' viewpoint in the depth that is necessary for a definitive response.

## II. ASSUMPTIONS

In a study of this nature and scope, there are necessarily some assumptions that will be made. Let us briefly describe these assumptions before we address the task at hand. James was written by the half-brother of Jesus who was also an authoritative leader in the Jerusalem church. It was most likely written before the Jerusalem council, probably around 45–47 A.D. This is best supported by the lack of references to the council and the early death of the author. It is also assumed that the letter is written to Christian Jews that are scattered abroad. This is argued by the use of the word “brother” when addressing the audience and by the reference to the “twelve tribes of the diaspora.” With these assumptions in mind, we shall begin our study.

## III. LEXICAL ANALYSIS

The first portion of our discussion will entail outlining the possible options of meaning that the verb σώζω may take in any given context. The various lexica representing the relevant periods of history surrounding the time in which the letter of James was written provide us with a veritable gamut of possibilities for meaning. We shall begin with an analysis of them and their respective definitions, then mention briefly other possible influences.

The Classical period gives some insight into the original Greek usage of the word σώζω as authors such as Plato, Homer, Plutarch, and others used it in varying contexts. The range of meaning derived from a study of this period depicts references centered mainly around physical deliverance from a present reality with occasional reference to an eternal salvation.<sup>5</sup>

The New Testament period is of course the most relevant to our study at hand. The meanings represented by authors of this time, most prevalently the New Testament authors themselves, seem to divide amongst three emphases. The first being mainly an eternal or eschatological salvation, the second referring to a preservation from physical

<sup>5</sup>The Classical period, as represented by Liddell and Scott, presents four options that the verb σώζω may mean in a given context (H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *The Greek English Lexicon* [New York: Harper, 1882] 1748). The first definition relates to persons being saved from death, kept alive, and escaping destruction. The second definition relates to things being kept safe or preserved. The third relates to keeping, observing, or maintaining something, such as a law. The fourth deals with keeping something in mind or remembering. All these definitions appear to have present realities in mind and do not refer specifically to an eternal perspective of salvation. This is not to say that such a connotation could not be inferred from the use of this verb, but it appears not to be a common usage in Classical literature. Cf. also Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 205–6, and Werner Foerster, *TDNT: Volume VII* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 965–69.

harm or destruction, and the third referring to a combination of the two.<sup>6</sup>

The Patristics seemed to be narrowed to only two options. They are the eternal and the physical used exclusive of each other.<sup>7</sup>

It may be helpful to this study to understand the Septuagintal (LXX) usage of σωζω as it represents various Hebrew texts. In the LXX, σωζω was used to translate many verbs, but two in particular seem to stand out as most relevant. They are ישע and מלט.<sup>8</sup> Each verb takes physical deliverance as its main referent, but can have a spiritual sense included over and above physical deliverance. There are no usages of these verbs referring exclusively to a spiritual state of salvation, but they can at times express this as their main emphasis. Such an emphasis is often found in prophetic passages.<sup>9</sup>

This can help us in establishing the etymological development of σωζω down through the time of the LXX and into the New Testament usage where the LXX was still referenced extensively. There had been adequate representation of the spiritual and eternal deliverance prior to the New Testament, but much of the emphasis was on present physical preservation as stated above. This understanding of LXX usage does not dictate the meaning in James, but it does provide us with a context of the development of the term during the writing of the New Testament, especially an early book like James.

<sup>6</sup>The New Testament period is best represented by W. Bauer, trans. by W. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) 798–99. This particular lexicon gives us three distinct definitional possibilities for σωζω. These are the preservation from natural dangers, the preservation from eternal death, and a combination of both categories. Preservation from natural dangers includes being saved from death, brought out safely, freed from disease, preserved in good condition, and a form of greeting that wishes prosperity to the recipient. Preservation from eternal death was used in both the active and passive voice. It was used in the active to denote the saving activity of persons, especially God or Christ, and of qualities that lead to salvation. The use of σωζω in the passive voice denoted being saved or the attainment of salvation. The combination of these two areas had both the eternal and present perspective in mind. Much evidence is given for the emphasis of the eternal nature of salvation, particularly in James' use of the verb, by Colin Brown and J. Schneider, *New International Dictionary* 211–16, and Werner Foerster, *TDNT* 989–98.

<sup>7</sup>The Patristic period, as represented by Lampe, seems to have been characterized by only two definitional variants for σωζω (G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1961] 1361–62). The first is a general reference of being saved from sickness or physical constraints. The second definition addressed the salvation that is given by God, the objects of God's salvation, and the means of salvation.

<sup>8</sup>For a brief lexical description of each, see Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew-English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979) 446–47 (ישע), and 572 (מלט).

<sup>9</sup>For a full development of the meanings found in the LXX, see Brown, *New International Dictionary*, 206–11, and Georg Fohrer, *TDNT* 970–80.

We have viewed the various options in meaning for σῶζω and it seems possible to narrow them down to just three fairly general usages, namely, 1) with reference to salvation from some type of natural danger, 2) eternal salvation or some facet thereof, and 3) a combination of these two. Certainly all the usages would have been known by James' readers. We must remember that this is not a grocery list from which to choose; it only helps us to better understand our options. The emphasis in determining meaning must be upon the usage of the word in its context. With this in mind, we must now turn our attention to the context in which 2:14 is set.

#### IV. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Verse 14 of chapter 2 may be translated as follows: "What is the use, my brothers, if a certain one should say he has faith, but does not have works? Is that faith able to save him?" (the expected answer being no).<sup>10</sup> Our task is to relate what meaning the word save (σῶζω) might take on in such a context. Is this salvation from some present hazard or misfortune, or is it salvation from eternal damnation, or is it possibly a combination of the two? The pattern that will be followed in this section is to look first at the centerpoint of the passage and expand to every point of reference that encircles the passage. The study begins with an examination of 2:14 itself, then gradually moves outward into the surrounding context of the book of James, and culminates with a brief section related to the historical setting encompassing the situation of James and the early church.

#### *James 2:14*

What is James saying when he pens 2:14? Obviously, he does not see much use to faith that does not have accompanying works. But what exactly does this faith entail? Does James see this faith being so weak as to result in forfeiting one's salvation and losing the confidence of eternal life with Christ? If we look at the form of argumentation that James is using, loss of salvation does not seem to be the point that he is making. What then is the point? As we examine James 2:14 more closely, he seems to speak of this faith unto salvation as something which one enters into initially. The emphasis he seems to make is an appeal for the reader to begin to exercise faith that will be able to save, not to continue to maintain a faith that could possibly be lost. Let us observe how this is expressed in the verse.

<sup>10</sup>The grammatical construction of this question includes the negative participle μὴ, thereby expressing James' expectance of a negative answer to the question. Cf. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1955) 265-66.

James begins his argument by asking a pragmatic question, "What is the use . . ." or "What is the advantage. . . ." We must first determine for whom the advantage is intended. Interestingly, there seems to be both a primary and a secondary advantage evidenced in the passage. The secondary advantage appears to be the benefit of others. This is especially true if we look at the next two verses where the same phrase is used to describe the profit that comes to the brother or sister who is sent away without clothing and in need of food. This is a very immediate reflection of the benefits of faith, or the lack thereof. But also evident is the primary advantage that is to be gained by the "one saying he has faith." This seems to agree best with the statement that directly follows the qualification of "no works," "Is that faith able to save him?"<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, the primary usefulness that is in view is the advantage to the man who says he has faith. The advantage that James points out as the most prevalent is this man's salvation. The primary grounds of benefit to be found in this faith must be in whether or not it can preserve him in a future judgement.<sup>12</sup>

James now focuses his attention on the man in question. It is important to remember that James is using a form of argumentation that does not directly point toward the people to whom he wants to convey this message. It is a form of rhetorical argument known as *diatribe* that gets its point across without necessarily naming the ones in question.<sup>13</sup> This is best evidenced here when he uses the supposed "man who says he has faith" and distinguishes him from the brothers, asking, "What use is it, my brothers, if a *certain man* . . . ?" This method of argumentation also uses short questions that make a point indirectly, as demonstrated in the question of usefulness, and in the phrase "Is that faith able to save him?" However, it must be remembered that James is intending this argument to be pointed toward certain ones amongst the brothers who are guilty of the problem. He shows this later in verse 16 where he uses the words "one from among

<sup>11</sup>Sophie Laws, *Harper's New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of James* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) 119.

<sup>12</sup>It is argued by Kendall that the *αὐτόν* used in 2:14 is necessarily referring to the *πτωχόν* who was mentioned in 2:6 (Kendall, *Once Saved* 207–17). This seems to strain much of accepted Greek syntax when there is a much more likely referent found in the immediate context of 2:14. To stretch the antecedent of this pronoun to 2:6 seems to be an unwarranted presupposition, especially since James feels it necessary to refer to the poor again in 2:15–16. It is also interesting to note that *αὐτόν* is masculine, accusative, singular (movable *ν* is unlikely). James illustrates his concept of the poor in 2:15 as including both male and female. It seems awkward to say that James has changed his understanding of referents for *αὐτόν* between 2:14 and 2:15–16 when 2:15–16 is a direct illustration of 2:14.

<sup>13</sup>For a further discussion of 'diatribe' see Adamson, *James* 103–4, or Martin Dibelius, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James* (rev. H. Greeven and ed. H. Koester; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976) 150ff.

you” and returns to addressing them directly as the guilty parties. The argumentation of James does not make its point of reference someone outside the group to which he is speaking, but rather finds its audience within the group. The man that James states “says he has faith” must be found within the intended audience of the letter. Could it be said that James is simply drawing an analogy similar to what the believers might be experiencing with someone outside of their fellowship? This would allow for the possible translation of *τις* to be *any man*. If we take the statement exclusive of the context, this is a plausible argument. However, James is not leaving the identity of the intended *man* so obscure. He identifies the workless faith of “those from among you” as equally useless and insufficient for salvation. This means that James is associating the *man* with the group of believers. He is one who professes faith in Christ, and in fact this is what James states, “If a man says he has faith,” ultimately referencing the same faith that is mentioned in 2:1, “faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.” This association with the audience of believers makes *τις* seem more specific and is better understood to refer to a *certain man*. James is not stating that the man is a true believer; in fact the distinction between a believer and this man is the intent of James’ singling him out. But James does understand him to be within the group of professing believers.

The syntactical construction of the phrase “If a certain man says he has faith” is somewhat helpful in understanding the meaning here as well. The third class conditional clause used with the subjunctive mood would indicate that there is a probable future condition in the mind of the author. James views this individual as one who will claim to have faith. James uses the probable future condition to establish what he believes to be the position of the “certain man,” but he is not willing to accept this claim at face value. He rejects the presence of true faith by measuring it according to its lack of works. James’ use of the probable future condition sets up the position of a hypothetical man whom he expects to be found within the intended audience of the letter. James can then take issue with what he understands to be a fallacious claim. James uses the third class conditional protasis and the subjunctive mood to establish a position on which he then casts much doubt.<sup>14</sup>

It may be quite appropriate to comment here on the doubt that James is implying. He is not necessarily making a dogmatic claim as to the profession of faith not being true, but he is also not taking this profession at face value. It would be quite proper for James to make some allowance and even use hypothetical argumentation since he is evi-

<sup>14</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: Volume VI* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1933) 33–34.

dently separated from most of the Christian Jews who will read this letter. But it is also quite appropriate for him to convey a certain amount of convictional and even judgmental authority due to his position in the church and the responsibilities that position would entail. James is making every effort to define for his readers the type of faith by which he expects them to be saved.

It may well be asked whether the faith in view is a faith in the saving work of Christ or simply a faith that the man in question has in his mind as a possible mere intellectual assent expressed in a lifeless proclamation or creed. James has used the word faith four times in the previous context: first, in relation to testing it through the endurance of trials (1:2–4); second, he uses it in the context of asking in faith and not having any doubt (1:6); third, he uses it in relation to how it is viewed with respect to others (2:1); and fourth, he uses it to describe the poor whom God had chosen to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom (2:5). All four of these usages seem to have the true faith that is unto eternal salvation in mind, even though they may be used in a very pragmatic sense.<sup>15</sup> This is especially true of the second usage which is qualified by the phrase “in our Lord Jesus Christ,” and the fourth usage which relates to those chosen by God to be the heirs of the kingdom. James has assumed all of these usages to contain true faith and he does not change his view of the essence of faith in 2:14–26. True faith is that which is expressed by Abraham and Rahab. These are set in contrast with the man who “says” he has faith. The understanding that James has of saving faith does not change in this passage. However, the man in question evidently has a different view of faith than what James understands faith to be.<sup>16</sup> There is not something

<sup>15</sup>James H. Ropes, *James* 203.

<sup>16</sup>This explains why James centers on this man’s proclamation of faith as distinct from his own definition of authentic faith. Cf. Calvin, *James* 309–10, and Polhill, “Prejudice” 400–401. James is not necessarily viewing this statement in 2:14 as a different kind of faith, rather he sees it as true faith being misrepresented. The man in question evidently has a view of faith that is not complete. Davids describes this use of James phrasing as having a different definitional quality (Peter H. Davids, “Theological Perspectives on the Epistle of James” *JETS* 23/2 [June, 1980] 102–3). Later in the development of this thought, he explains that James is using the definitional qualities to make the distinction between true faith that acts and false faith that does not act. This would certainly seem to fit with the way that the man’s faith is granted for the sake of argument, but James does not see it going any further than that when he states that it will not “save” and in reality is non-existent, or “dead.” Calvin also makes a distinction between the two faiths when he speaks of Jesus not entrusting Himself to those who only believed on His miracles in John 2:23 (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948] 100–101). MacArthur also gives a description of the distinctives made between various types of faith (MacArthur, “Faith” 22–23). Huther gives a good development on the meaning of faith without making definitional distinctions (J. E. Huther, *Heinrich A. W. Meyer’s Commentary on the New Testament: The*

lacking in faith per se, but there is something lacking in this man's understanding of it. This accounts for the doubtfulness that James has in the man's claim of faith. The difference seems to be directly related to the qualification James makes of the man having "no works."

James has made the statement that the man "says" he has faith, however doubtful it may be. He now further explains that this man has no works, providing the only possible reason within the immediate context to doubt the faith of the man in question. For James, the profession did not seem to convince him of the reality of the faith. Now we see the reasoning behind the doubt: the man has no works and so his profession of faith is called into question.

Next James points to the lack of works in this man's faith and asks, "Is that faith able to save him?" expecting a negative answer. This does not mean that James is promoting works as a means to, or a condition for, the salvation in question, he does not ask, "Is this lack/abundance of works able to save him?" He focuses still on the faith in question and makes it the determinant of the salvation he has in mind. The faith is the ultimate test of this salvation. However, it must not be ignored that he also makes the lack of works the reason for the doubtfulness of the man's profession of faith. Works appear to be the test of the faith James has in mind as the type of faith that will save. James says plainly that the man who is claiming faith, but not doing works, does not have a faith that can save.<sup>17</sup> To some observers, this might seem to fly in the face of free grace if eternal salvation is in view, but the argument does not stop with only this evidence.

James has presented an analogy in the preceding context of 2:1–13 concerning people who are exercising their "proclamation" of faith by disobeying the law. Naturally the first objection that would come to the mind of James' audience would be that obedience to the law does not bring one to salvation. James is not claiming that it does, but he is saying that the known, willful disobedience they are displaying causes him to question their salvation.<sup>18</sup>

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*General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude* [New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887] 86–88). These articles capture the essence of the definitional distinctions. However, it should be noted that the redefinition focuses on the proclamation of faith made by the man in question, not the way in which faith itself can take on various meanings.

Those who wish to find the definition of faith remaining the same throughout the entire argument of James have the right idea, but they push it too far when they presuppose a view of temporal salvation and eternal rewards being James' main concern; cf. Radmacher, "First Response" 37–38.

<sup>17</sup>It is very likely that James is also condemning those who are not "willing" to do works. This is established by the way James addresses the attitude of the "one who says" in 2:15–16 when he opts not to help those who are in need, even though the need is recognized.

<sup>18</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Wheaton: Victor, 1989) 132–33.



He goes even further to explain in the verses following 14 that their blatant and sinful disregard for their brother or sister causes him to pronounce their faith dead. What is a dead faith? It may be defined as a faith that is inactive, of which James has already explained will not save (2:14).<sup>19</sup> It is a faith that has separated the active pursuit of works from the simple proclamation of creed. James is not willing to accept the proclamation alone as sufficient evidence for salvation when the one making it is denying the opportunity before him to do works.<sup>20</sup> A dead faith may also be defined as that which the demons in verse 19 possess, a faith that does have knowledge and even belief in God, but is not willing to expend any effort for God, and in fact may work in opposition to God. James' view of faith does not change in this argument. He still has in mind the faith that is in "our glorious Lord Jesus Christ," and the faith that is held by those who are heirs to the kingdom. This is the faith that is somewhat in opposition to the "proclaimed" faith of the supposed man in verse 14 and to the "dead" faith of the verses following. When he explains that faith without works is dead, he is not saying that it has become weak and died. He is describing it as a faith that never was, non-existent in the eyes of James, and ultimately in the eyes of God.

The appeal mentioned briefly above to a "proclamation" of faith as the sole requirement for salvation seems to be just what James expects his audience to make when presented with the law in 2:1–13, and would explain why he introduces his argument in the immediately following context of 2:14–26. This is where we need to turn our attention next, the context surrounding 2:14.

### *The Meaning of σωζω in Surrounding Context*

We must now focus our study on what the best understanding of the word σωζω is in the larger context surrounding verse 14. We have already shown that the faith that James has in mind as efficacious for salvation and the faith the man in question has in mind are two very different understandings of faith. It is obvious that James would not affirm the propagation of a faith that would not be able to save anyone in the sense he has presented in 2:14. We have also seen that the man in question has a faith that will not save. Our focus in this section will be to understand the salvation as it is set in the whole of James intention.

<sup>19</sup>Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon* 104, and Ropes, *James* 217.

<sup>20</sup>This is a distinctively different situation from the thief on the cross whom Jesus said would be with Him that day. Jesus knew the man's heart, James makes no claim to know this objector's heart. Instead, James bases his exhortation on the opportunity for works that he has seen this objector fail to carry out. James is not arguing for a works foundation for salvation, rather he is imploring them toward a grace foundation for living.

Let us begin our study with the salvation that is presented in the earlier portions of James' letter. One might see 2:14ff. to be connected directly with 1:22, which is very true in regard to the same type of thought, that being the active pursuit of works.<sup>21</sup> This presents us with an interesting determination of how to define the verb σωσαι in 1:21 and 2:14. They are both aorist, active, infinitives, and both follow the verb δυναμαι—"to be able." There are in fact three occurrences of this complementary construction in the book of James, the third being found in 4:12. In this verse, it is substantial to note that God is established as the One who is able to save and to destroy. This is given in the context of the law and resultantly must carry some reference to eternal salvation.<sup>22</sup> It is likely that this is the main emphasis. This does not provide that the other two examples necessarily carry the same emphasis, but it does prove that James can in fact use this meaning. Let us now turn our attention to the two usages earlier in James.

In 1:18, James has just pronounced their existence as Christians being due to the means of the "word of truth" in the exercise of God's will. This "word" is further made active in their lives by the receiving of it implanted. This is where the description of the "word" is given as "able to save your souls" or "able to save your lives." The salvation in mind here may very well deal with a present salvation from death, or even a prolonging or prosperity in physical life.<sup>23</sup> This is well supported by the man's being blessed in what he does in 1:25, providing that a necessarily corresponding relationship between the "doing" and the "blessed" is present in the intended meaning. It also may very well have in mind the eternal salvation that has just been mentioned. This undoubtedly has some weight in James' mind since he substantiated the "word" as the means of their eternal life (1:18) and continues to promote this "word" as their sustenance for attaining some type of salvation (1:21) and their authority for instruction (1:22-23).

There is likely a good deal of reference by James back to the passages that he has referred to earlier in the letter in 1:9-11 (Psalm 103:15-16, Isaiah 40:6-7). These Old Testament passages speak of the

<sup>21</sup>Hodges, *Dead Faith* 12-13, and *Gospel Under Siege* 23-26.

<sup>22</sup>Manton, *James* 385-86. Laws presents a viewpoint which limits the judgment in 4:12 strictly to a statement of character with no temporal reference to future judgment (Laws, *James* 188). However, such a view does not seem to agree with her own development of 4:10 on page 185 being a possible aphorism to the gospel parable that ultimately relates to justification in the sight of the Son of Man, especially since 4:11-12 seems to be an illustration of proper humility before God, or the lack thereof.

<sup>23</sup>Hodges, *Absolutely* 120-22, and *Dead Faith* 12-13. Glaze sees this passage as dealing only with eternal realities, but this seems to leave little room for the present realities that are made so vivid in earlier portions of chapter 1 to take on the full shape of their existence (R. E. Glaze, Jr., "The Relationship of Faith to Works," *The Theological Educator* 34 [Fall, 1986] 35-38).

fading and withering that takes place in grass and the things of the earth. They also speak in the very next verses of the eternity of the Lord. In Isaiah, it speaks of His word standing forever. In Psalm 103, David says in the next verse that the loyal love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. These references would undoubtedly come to the minds of the Jewish readers when they heard of the temporality of men, especially rich men. It would seem quite likely that they would also remember the eternal aspects of the Lord, and the impact of His "word." The same "word" that brought them forth and saves their souls is the "word" that stands forever, the "word" that is eternal. The resultant meaning in this passage would then have a dual concept of present and eternal realization in view.

If 2:14 is necessarily connected with this argument, it stands to reason that it must also carry some of the same connotations with the emphasis being to one usage or the other, either present or eternal salvation. Those who would find this the best route to follow state that James appears to be using 1:21 as the theme for 1:21–2:26. It is then argued that throughout this passage, James is necessarily seen to be reflecting back on this theme in every reference to works and salvation. They state that James is loosely organized in his teachings, and stretches from one line of thought to another without any real warning.<sup>24</sup> As seen thus far in this study, this would give σωζω a resultant meaning of both eternal and present salvation in 2:14. However, the argument cannot end here in a speculative reorganization of the thought of James.<sup>25</sup>

It has become increasingly clear to this observer that the teaching of James relies on some unified thought and could be better understood accordingly. If we look at the argument of James 2:1–26 as more of a single unit, albeit with reminders back to chapter 1, there are several things which stand out as rather distinct patterns in James' logic.

James begins in verse 1 with an appeal to them as Christians not to hold their faith in a manner unbefitting the attitude of a Christian. He follows this with an example of how this is taking place in their assembly. This example closes by comparing them to judges with evil motives.

James then points out that their association with the rich is actually association with the enemy, and their treatment of the poor is not

<sup>24</sup>Hodges, *Dead Faith* 12–13, and *Gospel Under Siege* 23–24. Some even interpret James as comprising completely separate teachings with very little, if any, connection from one thought to the next; cf. Dibelius, *James* 1–11, 149.

<sup>25</sup>Huther also argues that there is a direct connection between the two passages, but sees the only referent to be eternal salvation (Huther, *James* 86). As was observed earlier with respect to Glaze's article, such a position does not seem to allow for the full expression of the intent in chapter 1.

in accord with the royal law since the poor are actually the ones who are to be their brothers in Christ. This being established, James calls their attention to the fact that they are transgressors of the whole law and not just one part of it.

He continues by appealing to them to act as if they were to be judged by the law of liberty, this is the same law that previously in 1:25 was the perfect law and by abiding according to it, a man shall become blessed in all that he does. In the instance of 2:13, James is referring to this law and the judgment that pertains to it, likely eschatological judgment.<sup>26</sup> Whatever else may be included in this law, it appears that there is at least some relation to the Decalogue and also possibly to the commands of Christ. It is seen to be "merciless to one who is not doing (showing) mercy."

From the standpoint of the recipients, James' audience is undoubtedly expecting him to remember the statement that he has made in verse 1 pertaining to their faith in Jesus Christ and not to present them with any type of an appeal to the law, especially not judgment by any law. With this judgment being presented to them as incentive, it seems to be a direct affront to their freedom from the law that was accomplished by Christ and His salvation. The natural response would be to say, "What judgment could I possibly fall under? I have faith, faith has set me free from any judgment. James, you must be mistaken to think that my works are a necessity, I have faith!" This seems to be an especially probable response for the audience James has in view. Most of his letter is devoted to showing them that they are lacking in discipline in many areas of their spiritual and physical lives. This appeal by James' readers is the direct link between 2:1-13 and 2:14-26.

The natural appeal to faith as the overriding bypass to works is expected by James. He has written with reference to the law to intentionally convict those who are not in obedience to its precepts. James expects his readers to attempt to render impotent his exhortation to avoid judgment. Their only hope to show judgment as having no authority over them is to appeal to faith alone, which James answers in his brief discussion with the objector in 2:14-26. This explains the necessity for James to include this section in his letter and fits well with the context of both the passage and his readers.

An appeal to faith alone from his readers must be an appeal to the faith unto eternal life since there could be little else in view when an appeal of this nature is made. If reward or blessing were the only ref-

<sup>26</sup>The Jewish mind would likely have referenced this judgment, or any other, to be related to the final judgment that would come during the last times. Cf. Davids, *James* 119, Dyrness, "Mercy triumphs" 12, and Lorin L. Cranford, "An Exposition of James 2," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 29/1 (Fall, 1986) 12, 26.

erents of the judgment, certainly James' audience does not expect to gain them by an appeal to faith alone as the purchasing agent. James has already shown that abiding is what makes a man blessed in what he does (1:25), and that the reward of the crown of life is given to the one who has shown himself to be approved by perseverance under trial. Eternal salvation must be the referent in view. Certainly it does not have to be limited to this since it was unlikely for the Christian Jew to think of the two as necessarily separated, but this must be the main emphasis here.

As a result, this gives us the emphasis of meaning that the verb σώζω necessarily must employ in 2:14. It is not necessarily connected to the salvation that is described in 1:21. The salvation that is described there has both eternal and temporal ramifications as its primary meaning. Instead, 2:14 must be understood as a response of James to the obvious objection that his readers would make when confronted with judgment according to the law. They appeal to faith alone to render this judgment incapable of accusing them. This is done according to an understanding that they have the purchasing agent out from under such a judgment. The judgment that James is speaking of and that they are attempting to avoid is one that appears to be optional. The only judgment that is described as optional is the final judgment, not judgment for rewards. Therefore, σώζω must have eternal salvation as its main referent with any other quality of meaning being rather small.<sup>27</sup>

This being the understanding of σώζω, let us examine, the entire verse to see what James has in mind in it. "What is the use, my brothers, if a certain one should say he has faith, but does not have works? Is that faith able to save him?" The appeal to faith from James' audience does not carry any weight for their eternal salvation since they cannot prove their faith to be a reality. This proof is ultimately not to be found in their simple proclamation of faith, but rather in the accompanying works. If they were making this proclamation, but not living like they were in fact part of the Christian family, works included, James was not convinced of their eternal salvation and appealed to them on that basis.<sup>28</sup>

### *Historical Context*

James was a leader of the early church in one of its more difficult periods. Persecution and ridicule by the public, and especially fellow

<sup>27</sup>Davids, *James* 120, Foerster, *TDNT* 995, Martin, *James* 81, Moo, *James* 101, and Schneider, *New International Dictionary* 216. For many others who concur, please reference many of the commentaries and related articles included in footnote 1 above.

<sup>28</sup>Chafer takes this view in his understanding of the foundation for James' appeal to works in light of true saving faith (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Salvation* (Findlay: Dunham, 1917) 82–83.

Jews, was to be expected. Being a leader, he would naturally be concerned about the witness and impact of the church to those around it, but even more importantly, he would be concerned about the welfare of those that were "in his care," so to speak. When these that he was directly or indirectly responsible for were not living up to the call, it was natural for him to be concerned. When they were not paying heed to the call, it was natural, and in fact quite proper, for him to doubt their authenticity. The audience that James had in mind was not ignorant of the teachings of the church. They knew what their relationship to Christ and His body should be. James was not trying to cause undue concern in his congregation, but he was trying to bring them one step closer in their relationship to Christ, even if that meant showing them their need for a more true introduction to Christ.

When reading through these arguments written by James, it is difficult not to be reminded of many passages that Jesus taught. Since this was likely one of the first books of the New Testament in circulation, it is improbable that there were many of the written gospel accounts available. However, James evidently had many of Jesus' sayings in mind or in written form when he wrote much of this letter. Luke records in the first few verses of his Gospel record that there were various reports being transferred amongst the people (1:1ff.). These may have been written or spoken accounts, which he then took the time to compile into one "consecutive" account.

When reading in particular of the judgment that James speaks of in chapter 2, the observer cannot help but think of Matthew 25:31ff. where Jesus speaks of His separating the sheep and the goats according to their works. Here deeds are the basis for inclusion or exclusion in relation to the kingdom.<sup>29</sup>

Most vivid in its direct correlation is the relation between James 2:14-26 and Matthew 7:13-23. In this passage, consent and profession are not the final determinants for acceptance into the kingdom. Rather, it is the decisive activity in accord with the proclamation of faith and devotion.<sup>30</sup> Jesus' teaching seems to directly parallel that of James which is true of much of the book of James and the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>31</sup>

#### V. POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS

Finally, we turn to examine several possible objections to the view supported here. These will be presented briefly, followed by

<sup>29</sup> Davids, *James* 38-39.

<sup>30</sup> Cranford, "Exposition of James 2" 25-26.

<sup>31</sup> Peter H. Davids, *James* 47-51, D. Edmund Hiebert, *The Epistle of James* (Chicago: Moody, 1979) 17, and Martin, *James* lxxiv-lxxvi.

responses from the understanding that seems best to fit the intent of James.

1. First, it is objected that σωζω in other places in the book of James means strictly or more emphatically the salvation from a present concern. As a result, it should be understood accordingly in 2:14. It is argued that James uses this more likely meaning in 5:15, 20 and it is unlikely that he would change his meaning here.<sup>32</sup>

This is a valid objection to consider since James' intent is to clarify, not to confuse, and to provide a unified understanding, not a disconnected group of words and phrases. However, the first observation that needs to be made of such an objection is that there had to be some indicator that led James' readers to believe that he was using this specific meaning of σωζω in those verses. That indicator, to be precise, would have to come from the immediate context of the verses surrounding the word or phrase in question. Good hermeneutics demands that a word's meaning must ultimately be determined from the context in which the author has presented it. With an understanding of the author's intent being our final goal, each context must be the primary consideration in interpreting specific statements. Other qualifications and definitions, such as comparison of other contexts and passages within the same book or other books, can certainly, and often do, have an impact on the meaning of a given word in its context, but that word's immediate context is the final authority. We have been shown by the exegesis presented in this paper that the context of James 2:14 allows, and even requires, an eternal salvation emphasis in the manner in which the verb σωζω is used within that verse.

Those who make the objection that σωζω has the same meaning in all its usages in the letter of James are not willing to allow a passage's immediate context to dictate what is the meaning of the author. The same is true of those who say that the meaning of σωζω in James 2:14 is necessarily a derivative of its usage in 1:21 without giving substantial warrant to claim this. The only warrant that is usually attached to such a claim is that it is the same word and a very similar subject matter. These are helpful in enlightening possibilities of meaning, but must not be the overarching guide in determining the final meaning.<sup>33</sup>

2. A second objection certainly comes to mind when speaking of the eternal ramifications of the verb σωζω in the question, "Why did

<sup>32</sup>Hodges, *Dead Faith* 12–13, and *Gospel Under Siege* 26–27.

<sup>33</sup>Radmacher, for example, recognizes that the problem of not dealing with the context can, and does, occur with respect to the use of the term σωζω, but apparently he fails to carry his reasoning through in the application of his hermeneutic. He, like Hodges, has already assumed a definition before coming to the context of James 2:14 (Radmacher, "First Response" 39–40).

James not make any type of reference to the Gospel if he was concerned about their salvation from eternal damnation?"<sup>34</sup>

This is a logical question since James does not make any mention of them receiving Christ, *per se*. One must be careful, however, when assigning any weight to an argument from silence. James does refer to them receiving the word, this being the instrument by which they were brought forth (1:18–21). But within this appeal there is no reference to the death and resurrection of Christ. We need not look far for an answer to the reason why there is no reference.

James was a leader of the church in Jerusalem and would certainly be recognized by any that had contact with Christianity, especially by any Jews, whether they be in Jerusalem or in the "diaspora," as James calls it. This letter would be meaningless to anyone who was not already familiar with Christianity and James could certainly assume that any who would read it would already be familiar with the essentials of the Gospel. Therefore, James can assume that they would already have the foundational knowledge of what constituted the Gospel message. His purpose was not to be redundant or to explain to those in the congregation who weren't believers what was the common creed. Instead, he wished to convict them of the areas in which they were falling short. The result is that he found it necessary to give an exhortation to them to receive more than simple knowledge, even to believe, for the demons were capable of that. The need that he saw amongst the dispersed Christians was to be pushed to live in accord with the profession of faith in Christ, even if this meant that they had to enter into true faith for the first time. James could count on them knowing the essentials of the Gospel plan. He simply showed them the full picture.

3. A related objection is that since James calls the readers "brothers," they must all be saved Christians.<sup>35</sup>

This argument tends to take too much for granted in proving that they are in fact Christians. It assumes that the term "brother" is used in a very technical sense, similar to the way that Paul used the word in many of his writings. This does not seem to be necessary in light of the situation of James. He is a Jew, in a Jewish community, writing to Jews. It was a common practice for a Jew to call a fellow Jew brother, whether Christian or non-Christian. It was also certainly customary for the Christian community to use the term brother when speaking to fel-

<sup>34</sup>Hodges, *Absolutely* 124–25.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.* 124–25; cf. also Hodges, *Dead Faith* 9–10, Dibelius, *James* 178, and Ryrrie, *Great* 74. Radmacher also appears to defend such a view (Radmacher, "First Response" 37). However, in accusing MacArthur of begging the question on this issue, Radmacher does not seem to recognize that he follows the same hermeneutical procedure as MacArthur in supporting his own viewpoint.



low Christians. But this does not necessitate that the term be used in a theologically precise manner when applied to every one of James' readers.<sup>36</sup> The situation of a contemporary pastor makes a good illustration.

It is doubtful that any pastor of a church today assumes that every person in his congregation is saved, especially if that congregation is spread abroad like James'. Just because someone in a church today is called "member" does not mean that they have received the gift of salvation, even amongst a supposed regenerate membership. James gives his readers the benefit of the doubt, like most pastors generally would, but he also does not hesitate to explain various aspects of salvation in relation to the "word" (2:18), and as we have shown earlier, the "works" (2:14), for the sake of those he considers unsaved.

4. A fourth objection states that the judgment referred to by James in 2:12-13 is not in any way related to the judgment unto hell from which Christ has saved His followers. Instead, this must refer to some other form of judgment.<sup>37</sup> Such an objection must first call into question the content of the law of liberty that James has in mind in 1:25 and 2:1-13. Those who make this objection are forced to say that it does not necessarily have to be inclusive of all parts of the Mosaic law since the only citations James makes are to the Decalogue and possibly a few teachings of Jesus. The result of such a limitation in the law is then understood to limit the judgment as well, often understood to be a judgment of rewards which will be considered in the next objection.

It is true that only the Decalogue and possibly Christ's teaching are referred to here, and the Decalogue may in fact be assimilated as well into the teachings and commands of Christ, but let us first look at the context in which Christ presented his teaching on the second greatest commandment, which incidentally, is found in Leviticus 19.<sup>38</sup> Christ Himself was certainly in favor of the keeping of the law in Matthew 5:17-20. Later in the same book, 22:34ff., Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment, to which he answered "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." He continued to give the second greatest, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." This second commandment is the same one that

<sup>36</sup>MacArthur makes this same point; however, does not make mention of the evidence of James' very strategic, and even precarious, Jewish/Christian position (MacArthur, "Faith" 29).

<sup>37</sup>Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege* 26-27.

<sup>38</sup>For a brief development of this correlation, see footnote #64 of Cranford's "Exposition of James 2," 24. For a more lengthy and complete study, see Luke T. Johnson, "The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," *JBL* 101/3 (September, 1982) 391-401.

James has quoted for his audience. There were certainly distinctions to be made between the purposes behind Moses' and Christ's use of the law and intent in relating it to the people, such as the case of the sacrificial law, but there are also many similarities. In all of the passages mentioned thus far, obedience is the expected outcome from the exhortation. When James mentions the whole law, his readers would undoubtedly remember how Christ had used the phrase "whole law" in Matthew 22:34ff. It is also likely that they would remember the way in which Christ had spoken of the completion of the law to take place in Him, but not the abolition of the law. He still expected them to obey the law given to Moses, the whole law, which also may be understood as the moral precepts found within the law, until the kingdom is established. The key to this argument is found in the fact that James, like Christ, expects his readers to act in a manner that represents obedience to the whole law. James explains that they should act as though they were to be judged by the law. James' readers who are unwilling to attempt keeping the precepts of the law will naturally try to find a way out from under it. The appeal James expects them to make is to faith alone. But James explains that their kind of faith is not the kind that will save them or anyone, being only a belief that is no more than that of the demons.

There can be no doubt that obedience to these commands, and in fact the whole law would certainly come to the forefront of the minds of James' readers, especially when the judgment in verse 13 appears to give a reference to final judgment and since James has just explained that the one who breaks a part of the law actually breaks the whole law. This gives us a more vivid picture of exactly why the appeal to faith would be their first recourse against such demands. However, it must be remembered that James does not say that they will necessarily be judged by the law he has referred to, but he does appeal to them to act as though they were to be judged by it. This leads us to our next objection.

5. As stated above, the fifth objection concerns the judgment in view and the possibility of rewards. Those who are opposed to this judgment being one which will convict lost sinners of sin and sentence them to eternal damnation are forced to make this the judgment that will take place when Christ judges the Christian's works and gives out rewards based upon that judgment.<sup>39</sup>

This does not seem to align with the reasoning that James presents. To begin with, every Christian will pass through the judgment of Christ that pertains to Christian rewards, all would agree to this. But James does not seem to have such a required judgment in mind.

<sup>39</sup>Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege* 26.

Instead, he is thinking of judgment as something that can be escaped through true faith. If such a judgment unto rewards were in view, why would he appeal to it as optional (2:12–13) and even present deliverance from it as essential for the Christian (2:14—“save” or “deliver”)? In 2:12–13, James has stated that there is a way to triumph over, meaning to “exult over” or “boast against,” judgment.<sup>40</sup> This way is found in showing mercy and acting in accord with the law of liberty. If taken by itself this could be understood as a meritorious type of accomplishing works to be brought through the judgment, such as that in 1 Corinthians 3. When a believer is judged for rewards, this judgment is based upon the accomplishments of that believer. This would necessitate that the judgment James speaks of has the accomplishments of those passing through as its main subject for scrutiny. However, such an understanding is not borne out in the text. James speaks of a judgment quite the opposite from that of rewards. The judgment he is warning against is based upon sin (2:9–11), not upon the works of the person. The judgment that he has in mind does not look at the accomplishments of the person, rather it inspects the person’s sinful transgression and judges upon that basis. This type of judgment is not with a view to reward, but with a view to convict and punish.

When James appeals to the law, he expects his audience to appeal to faith as the single agent to deliver them out from under the required judgment by the law. One would expect James to appeal to them on the basis of a forfeiture of reward if such a judgment unto rewards is in view, but he does not. He appeals to their salvation and deliverance from judgment, not a salvation which will prolong their temporal life or add to their reward in heaven, but a salvation which is ultimately unto eternal life.

6. A sixth objection takes issue with the traditional understanding of the definition of a “dead faith.” The objectors argue that James could not possibly have had eternal salvation in mind since “the faith that is now dead must once have been alive, just as a dead body must once have had life.”<sup>41</sup>

This argument is supported mainly by an appeal to the fact that dead faith is compared to a dead body in 2:26. This may seem like a relatively literal way of thinking of this analogy, but it seems that in so doing, it proves too much. Let us see how this would be understood if taken completely in the literal sense: Faith without works is dead. The body without the spirit is dead. The body cannot be made physically

<sup>40</sup>For a representative definition of κατακαυχᾶσθαι, see G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986) 234.

<sup>41</sup>Much of the argument in Hodges’ *Dead Faith* rests upon this assumption (cf. 7–9). Cf. also Hodges, *Absolutely* 125–26, and Hodges *Gospel Under Siege* 19–20.

alive again (until the rapture). So also faith must be, according to this view, lying in a state of dormancy, waiting to be revived. James does seem to be assuming that faith can be brought into an active state, but only by the decision willingly to do works by the one who has the faith. Is James also saying that if one who has died decides he wants to live again, he will in fact be raised from the dead due to his own decision, or is James saying that, since we on earth have the ability to decide to revive our faith, we also have the power to decide who shall be raised physically from the dead? This hardly seems likely.

James is not using this analogy to show that what was once alive must be made alive again. His purpose behind using this illustration is to show those who hold only to a dead belief that their faith is useless and void. It is void for any usefulness to the poor who need help, and even void for their own salvation. They have not lost their faith, as the body has been separated from the soul. Neither is it lying in a state of dormancy. Instead, they have never had true faith.

It seems more literal and understandable to see James' analogy in a somewhat figurative sense. James is making an analogy of the body without the spirit to show that faith without works is just as inactive and just as useless. He has not assumed that the faith must have once been alive or that it must, in essence, be raised from the dead. Such an argument does not agree with the purpose James has in mind.<sup>42</sup>

7. Some objections that certainly have been made to the book of James deal with the apparent discrepancy between the letter of James and the letters of Paul. It is not within the scope of this paper to remedy each and every apparent discrepancy between James and Paul. Such discussions have been given ample consideration elsewhere.<sup>43</sup> Instead, we shall look at the overriding intent of each author and see why the divergence may appear.

Each author, James and Paul, was in a particular position and also dealt with a specific occasion. As has been stated previously, James

<sup>42</sup>MacArthur makes this distinction quite clearly as well by showing that it is not works that keeps faith alive, but rather faith is made alive as an impartation of God. From this MacArthur draws the conclusion that James "pictures works as the invigorating force and faith as the body" (MacArthur, "Faith" 31-32). Saucy explains that MacArthur may have misconstrued the point of the analogy. He rightly understands the main point to be that works are evidential of living and useful faith. A dead faith is evidenced by no works being present. Similarly a dead body is evidenced by no spirit being present (Robert L. Saucy, "Second Response to 'Faith According to the Apostle James' by John F. MacArthur, Jr.," *JETS* 33/1 (March, 1990) 44.

<sup>43</sup>For some remarks alluding to this view, see James Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) 251-52 and a brief study on the subject by Thorwald Lorenzen, "Faith without Works does not count before God! James 2:14-26," *ExpTim* 89/8 (May, 1978) 233-34. For a development of the argument with rebuttal, see Rakestraw, "James 2:14-26" 31-50, and G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 131-40.

was a leader of the Jerusalem church and his concerns would mainly have been with the ongoing preservation and building up of the believers within the Jerusalem church and those who would be in close contact with the dispersed church and its teachings. This ultimately would have made him very subjective when it comes to the faith and ongoing works of the believers. James was concerned with developing the beliefs and habits of those who had been Christians for a long time and convicting those who thought they were, but really weren't. His main interest would have been with the sanctification of the believers, their practical justification.

Paul, on the other hand, was very evangelistically minded in his teaching, and these teachings were targeted mainly for people outside of familiarity with any proper type of works within a Jewish religious perspective. His presentations to these people would naturally be from a very objective viewpoint in the eyes of God. Paul was concerned with bringing people to faith who had never heard the Gospel of Christ. He did not neglect to demand changed lives, but he did not emphasize such things, as forthrightly as does James, as a necessary ingredient to the acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. This does not make the emphasis unnecessary, it was simply not appropriate in the timing of Paul to present this in his initial appeals to belief. Paul's greatest concern at this point was with the justification, not the sanctification, of the believer.

Each author had his own purposes and his own way of presenting the truth he felt his audience needed to hear. If we understand them as writing to very different groups of people, and from very different situations, it becomes much easier to understand why there is a sense of diversity between them. They do not disagree. They simply have different emphases within their teachings.<sup>44</sup>

8. The eighth objection relates to what constitutes the faith that is mentioned in 2:14. The objectors state that James, in asking, "Is *that* faith able to save him?," is not making an entreaty to the proclamation of faith just mentioned, but rather to real saving faith in Christ. This argument hinges upon the definite article that does not appear in 2:14 with the professed faith (first occurrence of πίστις), but does occur with the faith that is ultimately not able to save (second occurrence of πίστις). It is said that such divergence in the writing of the article is of no significance and the faith in view is true faith.<sup>45</sup>

It is true that the article was certainly optional at times in the mind of the Greek, but in a direct argument, such as the one presented

<sup>44</sup>Moo, *James* 108–17. MacArthur also develops this understanding briefly; cf. MacArthur, "Faith" 27–28.

<sup>45</sup>Dibelius, *James* 152, and Hodges, *Dead Faith* 11, and *Gospel Under Siege* 22–23. An interpretation that this position suggests is also assumed in Hodges' *Absolutely* 124–25.

here by James, it is highly unlikely that he is simply being careless in his writing method. The use of the article in such a case as this is more likely anaphoric. Since James has already referred to a certain faith in the immediately preceding sentence, it seems most appropriate for him to be specifying the kind of faith he has just mentioned. This would allow for the interpretation of "that faith" or "such faith" in his second usage. Usage of the article in other passages of James must be determined by their own context, and it must also be allowed for context to determine the proper meaning here.<sup>46</sup>

Those who would like to understand the faith in 2:14 to be true faith hope to force the issue with an appeal to works being understood to be a condition for salvation if faith is taken to be other than true faith. The purpose behind such an appeal is to push those who would affirm salvation by grace into saying two contradictory things. First that salvation is by grace through faith, as all would agree, and second that works is a necessary condition for faith, which contradicts the first statement. The objectors find a way out of this predicament by understanding this faith as true faith and the works being a condition for rewards. However, as was shown above rewards is not what James had in mind when he speaks of judgment and salvation. Therefore, faith must be understood to be something other than true faith.

The objectors seem to be showing too much of a bias in the assumptions behind such an argument. Faith and works do not necessarily have to be diametrically opposed to one another. It seems to fit James' understanding best to find faith as the purchasing agent of salvation, but not if it is only a statement of creed and not a way of life. Works are the natural expression of that faith. They are not a condition for faith and salvation, but rather an exemplification of it.<sup>47</sup> If there be any conditions placed upon the faith, they are conditions upon the One in whom the faith is placed, not upon the one who holds the faith, but James by no means places himself in a position to judge conditions, only the observable results.

<sup>46</sup>A. T. Robertson, *Studies in the Epistle of James* (Nashville: Broadman, n.d.) 94 n. 2, and Robertson, *Word Pictures* 34. Those who wish to deny this and rely on other instances to prove the point are not dealing with the matter at hand in 2:14–2:17. James uses this segment to show explicitly that *that* faith, the faith that is only a proclamation, without works is dead. This fits well with James' use of the article in both 2:14 and 2:17. After these verses, there is another segment of argumentation started and another objector introduced. Thus, these must be left to speak for themselves.

<sup>47</sup>Perhaps the best illustration of this connectedness is developed by Ryrie. He states that the faith spoken of in James 2:14–26 is "... like a two coupon train or bus ticket. One coupon says, 'Not good if detached' and the other says, 'Not good for passage.' Works are not good for passage, but faith detached from works is not saving faith!" (Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* [Chicago: Moody, 1972] 133–34).

9. There is one final objection which is somewhat peripheral to the issue at hand, but we will give a brief description and answer to it. This objection deals with the use and interpretation of James 2:18–19. The objection made is that these verses do not imply theological import to the argument James is presenting. The reasons for such an assertion by one interpreter are that the one who is speaking here is not James and therefore the debate, when rightly interpreted, centers around pragmatism. This approach is supported by the argument that the word  $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ —"without" is not included in "most,"<sup>48</sup> or "the majority of"<sup>49</sup> Greek manuscripts and in fact the word is replaced by the preposition  $\epsilon\kappa$ —"by."<sup>50</sup> Much is also made by another interpreter of where to punctuate the verses, resultantly attributing part of the argument to James and part to the supposed debater.<sup>51</sup>

Let us begin our discussion with the "most" Greek manuscripts that do not contain the word  $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  and replace it with  $\epsilon\kappa$ .<sup>52</sup> It seems disturbing that most contemporary textual critics have not seen any substantial warrant for an appeal to the aforementioned "most" Greek documents in this instance.<sup>53</sup> Just how many there are is not mentioned by the objectors in great detail. However, the qualitative referent in this context seems to be "most," which is a dangerous tool to use when evaluating literary texts. Quantity alone should not be preeminent as a deciding factor.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>48</sup>Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege* 27.

<sup>49</sup>Hodges, *Dead Faith* 16.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid. 16–17; also Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege* 27–28.

<sup>51</sup>Dibelius, *James* 149–51, 154–58.

<sup>52</sup>It is explained by Hodges that there are some extant "Byzantine" manuscripts which contain the variant  $\epsilon\kappa$  in place of  $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  (Zane C. Hodges, "Light on James Two from Textual Criticism," *BibSac* 120 [October–December, 1963] 344–47). However it would hardly seem sufficient evidence for qualifying them as "many" while assuming accuracy; see also Zane C. Hodges and Aurthur L. Farstad, *Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982) introductory notes and the critical apparatus on James 2:18.

<sup>53</sup>The variant  $\epsilon\kappa$  is considered by many scholars hardly worth including in the critical apparatus, and when it is represented, it is done so with little evidence to recommend it as a preferred reading. This does not necessarily classify it as wrong, but it does cause the variant to be quite suspect. Those who support the "Byzantine" text as the preferred text (also referred to by many proponents as the Majority text) would like to convince critics of its credibility based upon external evidence, especially number of documents. Number is the basis on which supporters of the Majority text rest for their methodology. However, even in his article, Hodges apparently appeals to these texts only to show that such an emendation is possible, not necessary. This is best illustrated by his admission of stronger external evidence in favor of  $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ , and his appeal to internal evidence as the ultimate criteria for a final decision; cf. Hodges, "Light on James Two" 347.

<sup>54</sup>For a generally accepted outline of principles used in textual criticism, see Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987)

The interpretation derived by those who replace *χωρίς* with *εκ* in 2:18 is "You have faith, and I have works; show to me your faith *from* (*εκ*) your works, and I will show to you, from my works, my faith."<sup>55</sup> Such a change in translation, as has been well observed by one of its proponents, would reduce the argument of correlation between faith and works to absurdity by the debater.<sup>56</sup> In other words, there is an underlying assumption made by the debater that neither of the persons involved can in fact show faith through the resultant works. It is then posited that the debater continues on to show James in 2:19 that James' simple creed of "God is one" is not enough to inspire works, but is only a statement of belief. Thus the simple statement of belief is shown to be sterile by the debater who expects James to agree and see the point that faith and works are in no way related. In 2:20ff., James makes his statement in the debate and proves the debater wrong by stating that faith and works are necessarily connected, being best illustrated by Abraham and Rahab.<sup>57</sup>

The problem with such an interpretation is that it greatly reduces the impact of the argument James is using to enforce the relationship between faith and works. The absurdity argument seems to be an appeal to a general principle or simple statement of rebuttal, and an absurd one at that. However, if we see James as the one who is behind the debater asking "professing" believers to show their faith apart from their works, this further convicts them of their false profession in 2:14. In this case, the one who is professing belief is seen to be without a trace of proof to back up the claim. This fits James' situation and intent much better, and in fact makes the argument much more forceful within the context of Jewish believers in the relatively new church community of Christ. The Christian community's validity would often be questioned by those outside it. The orthodox Jew, or anyone else outside Christianity, could not help but wonder at a religion that did not live up to its claims.

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275–76. As stated earlier, Hodges in fact admits that he does not wish to rely on this alone when he appeals in his article to internal evidence as the compelling criteria (Hodges, "Light on James Two" 347). For a good discussion of the methodology behind the Majority text, see Zane C. Hodges, *Defense of the Majority Text* (unpublished article available at Dallas Theological Seminary Book Room, no date), or a brief representation of the methodology by the same author in *Which Bible?* (2d ed.; ed. David O. Fuller; Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International, 1971) 25–38. For an insightful critique of the methodology, see Daniel B. Wallace, "Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text," *BibSac* 146/583 (July–September, 1989) 270–90.

<sup>55</sup>Hodges, "Light on James Two" 348.

<sup>56</sup>Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege* 27, and more completely in "Light on James Two" 348.

<sup>57</sup>This view does not seem to fit well into the surrounding logical context of James 2, nor does it appear to do justice to the argument that James is establishing. For a more complete exposition of the view, see Hodges, "Light on James Two" 347–50.



The interpretation of 2:19–20 in this view understands James to be speaking again in 2:19. He is pointing to their simple profession and comparing it to the worthless professions of the demons. James is saying that the one who relies on such a simple proclamation and is not willing to follow through has no more faith than a demon, which is ultimately worthless for salvation.<sup>58</sup>

The second point that necessarily must be made is that no matter how one punctuates the verse in question, the teaching is still one that James refers to as support for “faith without works is dead.” This would mean that one must thereby interpret the passage as one that teaches such a position. This is in fact easily seen no matter who is speaking in the passage, James as the supposed arguer or someone else. The argument still says essentially what James has said already and continues to show by referring to the same conclusion “faith without works is dead,” and that a faith true to the professed affirmation is observably active.

The third segment of concern for some with this passage is that it is not introducing any theological appeal into the argument. Whether James or some supposed debater is speaking in verse 19 is of little consequence to this debate. The argument is cited as being in support of what James is presenting, and James ultimately agrees with what is being said. But if the reference is not a supportive theological statement of what true faith must contain, then what else could it possibly be? Is it just an explanation of the demons’ monotheism, not relating to their destiny?<sup>59</sup> Certainly it cannot be only that when we see what the response of the demons is to their belief. They are shuddering. This seems to indicate their knowledge of what is confronting them when they recognize God for who He is. Their ultimate fear is final judgment.

Could we possibly suppose that the appeal in this passage is simply a comparison of the present works of the demons here on earth, naturally doing bad works or no works at all, to the good works that are to be representative of the “believer’s” life? This seems like an unlikely proposition since the emphasis in verse 19 is not on works, it is on belief. James makes an appeal to this to support his view of works but that is not the object in question at this moment. Instead, the belief that is ascribed to the “proclaiming” believer is being compared to the belief of the demons. To ascribe works to the demons, bad as they may be, could possibly be assumed, but to ascribe any kind of works to the person who simply “believes that God is one” is not something James is likely to do since he appeals to it as an example of

<sup>58</sup>For a good discussion of this view with a brief explanation of the meaning and impact of 2:19, see Adamson, *James* 293–97.

<sup>59</sup>Hodges, *Dead Faith* 17, and Ryrie, *Great* 121–22.

“dead faith,” “faith without works.” Therefore, the level of comparison must be maintained on an intellectual level, over and above pragmatism.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately, theology is introduced when we bring the entire context of the previous few sentences to bear on this verse. Since the argument about the belief of the demons is on an intellectual plane, and not pragmatic, it also follows that what is in view is not any type of possible rewards system or meritorious discussion of faith. This adds credibility to our position on the salvation that James has in mind in 2:14. What James has in view is not a type of meritorious faith, but rather a faith that includes true belief and pragmatic development. In like manner, the salvation that he is presenting here also must not be dealing with the meritorious reward concept, but rather something else. The only option open to us is one that pertains to the eternal salvation of the believer, and resultantly the eternal damnation of the demons.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we should review the understanding of salvation in James 2:14 that was arrived at earlier in this study and suggest some warnings in its use. James 2:14 speaks of the eternal salvation that is found in Christ and Christ alone as Lord and Savior. The acceptance of Christ is borne out in the life of the believer not through a simple proclamation of faith, but rather in the works that accompany such a statement of belief. If a person is claiming to have saving faith, but is not doing the works that result from the changed life, then that person is not saved according to the teaching of James.

The teaching of James is in complete accord with that which is found in other passages relating to the salvation/works relationship. Jesus spoke of it explicitly when condemning those who only verbalize his Lordship, but do not do the will of His Father (Matt 7:15–27, cf. 5:16). It can also be seen on numerous occasions that Paul speaks strongly concerning the essential expression of faith being found in works (Rom 1:5, 2:6–8, 6:17–18; 1 Cor 13:2, 15:58; 2 Cor 10:5–6; Gal 6:4–8).

The understanding of James 2:14 espoused in this study is based upon the fact that the word *σῶζω* in this verse speaks of eternal salvation, not a deliverance from a present crisis or an earning of rewards. The aspect of eternal salvation was borne out in the differentiation that James made between saving faith and proclaimed faith that has no works. This proclamation of faith was the response James expected to his presentation of the law and judgment. This judgment is not with a view to a meritorious form of works, rather it is based upon transgres-

<sup>60</sup>Adamson, *James* 294–96, and Davids, *James* 125–26.

sion of the law of liberty, which James explains to be sin. With a proclamation of faith alone being the response that James expects his readers to give as a bypass to this judgment, the judgment must consequently have eternal ramifications. He has shown them in no uncertain terms that such a simple proclamation was not enough to save if the one making it did not have accompanying works.

It may be worthwhile to point out a few possible abuses that could result from this study and others like it. It is best not to forget these temptations when putting the teachings of James into practice.

First, James does not presume to be dogmatic about judging the eternal security or damnation of the people in question, likewise neither should his interpreters pronounce such judgment. The argument of James, however pointed it may be, is still intentionally exhortational toward spurring on his audience to good works and the beginning of a faith that is efficacious to salvation. We must be careful when we are in a place of leadership; it is a great temptation for us to presume we know more than we actually do simply because of what we have seen. This should not deter us from being honest and straightforward in our exhortations, but it should cause us to refrain from being overly dogmatic about what we have observed. Only God can judge the heart.

This brings us to the second possible temptation a leader will encounter when applying this. As discussed above, it is easy to over-emphasize a passage such as this. However, it is also easy to ignore a passage that seems to be so strong in its teaching. We must be faithful to our brothers not to shy away when they become entrapped in some type of false teaching that does not accord with the teaching of the Bible. It is relatively easy to tell people to love one another in our exhortations. It is another thing altogether to tell them they are in danger of going to hell. We must not be afraid to proclaim the whole counsel of God as is found in His Word.

Third, it is important to understand how we as interpreters approach the Biblical text when we are confronted with an apparent problem. The text must always be our authority, not our theology nor our personal bias which may be drawn from past experience. When approaching a problem, it is very easy to succumb to the first inclination that intrigues the mind and emotions. However, we should be ready to give up our position if it is shown by the Word of God to be faulty. Biblical interpreters must continually be on guard against themselves. As James said himself, "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

Finally, as students of the Bible, we must continually recognize that encounters such as these are not exercises in futility, but rather are a blessing to our soul as we grow in Christian maturity and become more familiar with the Word of God. We must continually approach the Bible



# WHAT DOES THE GREEK FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL IMPLY? GRICEAN METHODOLOGY AND THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANCIENT GREEK GRAMMARIANS

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*Debate has been engaged for more than a century over what implications, if any, a Greek First Class Conditional (FCC) has concerning the proposition in its protasis. Some pedagogical grammars claim that the Greek FCC is well translated with the English causative construction introduced with “since.” In this paper a twofold approach is used to show that this claim is in error.*

*First, a methodology for formulating and testing hypotheses concerning historical languages is established. The methodology is based on a Popperian view of hypothesis testing. In this case a testable hypothesis is formed utilizing the descriptive apparatus of H. P. Grice. The hypothesis is that the FCC is well translated with English “since” and it is proven false.*

*Second, the testimony of four ancient Greek grammarians is evaluated. The grammarians examined are: Dionysius Thrax (1st century BCE), Apollonius Dyscolus (2nd century CE), Stephanos and Heliodorus (Byzantine period). It is shown that these grammarians agree with the conclusion that it is not appropriate to translate the FCC with an English causal introduced by “since.”*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**D**OES a Koine Greek conditional sentence introduced by εἰ (“if”) with the indicative imply the truth of the proposition in its protasis? Debate on this issue has been engaged for over 100 years. In the 19th century two of the major participants in the debate were William

Goodwin<sup>1</sup> and Basil Gildersleeve.<sup>2</sup> Early in this century, A. T. Robertson,<sup>3</sup> claiming to be in the Gildersleeveian tradition, asserted that the truth of the proposition in the protasis is implied to be true or at least assumed true for the sake of argument. Some modern pedagogical grammars follow Robertson's assertions and carry them to an extreme that Robertson himself did not.

These pedagogical grammars claim that a Greek conditional introduced by  $\epsilon\iota$  with the indicative should be translated with an English causal construction. That is, a sentence like:

(1a)  $\text{Εἰ οὖν συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε (Col 3:1)}$

should be translated with the causal (1b) below and not with the conditional (1c).

(1b) Since then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above.

(1c) If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above.

They claim that sentence (1a) implies that the proposition in its protasis, namely, "You have been raised up with Christ," is true and for this reason an English causal sentence should be used. Recently, James Boyer<sup>4</sup> argued that such a claim is in error.

This debate has been clouded by at least two factors: ambiguity of terms and hypotheses formulated in an untestable manner. For this reason, no one has achieved a level of proof on which all can agree. However, H. P. Grice<sup>5</sup> has developed linguistic theory which provides a descriptive apparatus in which testable hypotheses concerning implications can be formulated. Using Grice's descriptive apparatus it is pos-

<sup>1</sup>William Goodwin, "The classification of Conditional Sentences in Greek Syntax," in *Journal of Philology* 15 (1874) 188-205; "'Shall' and 'Should' in Protasis, and Their Greek Equivalents," in *Journal of Philology* 18 (1877) 18-38; *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb* (London: MacMillan, 1889); *Greek Grammar* (London: MacMillan, 1879, reprinted by St. Martin's, 1878) §§ 1381-1424.

<sup>2</sup>Basil L. Gildersleeve, "Studies in Pindaric Syntax," in *American Journal of Philology*, 3 (1882) 434-55; "A Reply to E. B. Clapp," in *American Journal of Philology* 9 (1888) 491-92; "Stahl's Syntax of the Greek Verb," in *American Journal of Philology* 30 (1909) 1-21.

<sup>3</sup>A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934).

<sup>4</sup>James L. Boyer, "First Class Conditionals, What Do They Mean?" in *Grace Theological Journal* 2.1 (1981) 75-114.

<sup>5</sup>H. P. Grice, "Logic and Conversation," in *Syntax and Semantics* 3, *Speech Acts*, ed. P. Cole and J. P. Morgan (New York: Academic, 1975) 41-58; H. P. Grice, "Further Notes on Logic and Conversation," in *Syntax and Semantics* 9, *Pragmatics*, ed. J. M. Sacks (New York: Academic, 1978) 113-27.

sible to define a clear and unambiguous hypothesis to test whether or not the claim of these pedagogical grammars is indeed sound. In the following paper, the assertions of some grammarians over the past century are reviewed. The claim of the pedagogical grammars which assert that a first class conditional should be translated with English "since" is formulated into a testable hypothesis. The methodology employed proves unambiguously that conditional sentences introduced with  $\epsilon\iota$  plus the indicative do not imply the truth of the proposition in the protasis.

In the debate over the implications of Greek conditionals, no one has gone back to examine what ancient Greek grammarians said about the issue. A second purpose of this paper is to do just that. The relevant claims of Greek grammarians from 200 B.C. to A.D. 600 are reviewed. These confirm that conditional sentences introduced with  $\epsilon\iota$  with the indicative do not imply that the proposition in the protasis is true.

## II. NOTATIONAL CONVENTION

There are two conditional particles in Greek:  $\epsilon\iota$  and  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ . Readers of this paper not familiar with Greek may, for the time being, consider both  $\epsilon\iota$  and  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  to mean "if" neglecting any differences in meaning between them. Greek also has a causal particle  $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota$  which is well translated by the English "since."

Many grammarians categorize the Greek conditionals in different ways and use different names for their categories. Only two of the forms of the conditionals will be discussed in this paper: the forms many grammarians call the first and third class conditionals. The causal construction will also be discussed. The following notational shorthand will be used to refer to these constructions.

Shorthand	Syntactic form	Common name
$\epsilon\iota$ p,q	$\epsilon\iota$ + indicative, indicative	first class conditional
$\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ p,q	$\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ + subjunctive, indicative	third class conditional
$\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota$ p,q	$\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota$ + indicative, indicative	causal construction

In this notation, "p" and "q" are variables representing clauses in the protasis and apodosis respectively.

## III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARGUMENT

### A. William Goodwin

William Goodwin sets forth his claims in no uncertain terms:

- (2) Probably no grammarian would now maintain the absurdity that the indicative in the protasis expresses either "certainty in fact" or "what is believed by the speaker to be true." . . . Most grammarians

are eager to disclaim any connection between the “certainty” here intended and the matter of fact or even opinion; and thus they reduce the “certainty” to a harmless abstraction, which is utterly valueless as a definition . . .

I have now nothing to change the statement which I made in 1864, . . . Every example that I have met has only confirmed the opinion, which I now express with the greatest confidence that there is no inherent distinction between the present indicative [ $\epsilon\iota$  p,q] and present subjunctive [ $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q] in the protasis, except that of *time*<sup>6</sup> (Goodwin’s emphasis).

Goodwin spends the bulk of his article on aspectual and temporal differences between conditionals of the form  $\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q and  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q when the proposition q is expressed with a future indicative.

### B. Basil Gildersleeve

Concerning the first class condition Gildersleeve says:

- (3) It is used of that which can be brought to the standard of fact; but the standard may be for or against the truth of the postulate. All the logical condition [ $\epsilon\iota$  p,q] asserts in the inexorable connection of the two members of the sentence. It is the favorite condition in argument . . . when one wishes to be or seem fair . . . when one is sure of the premise. . . . But so long as the negative continues to be  $\mu\eta$ , the conditional and the causal do not coincide. . . . In prose, it is semi-causal.<sup>7</sup>

An observation to make concerning this passage is that Gildersleeve does not say that  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q implies that the proposition p is true like a causal  $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota$  p,q does. On the contrary, he even says it does not do so. Robertson claims to be in the Gildersleeveian tradition. However, the terminology he uses is not as concise as Gildersleeve’s and he has been interpreted by some to suggest more than Gildersleeve did, namely that  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q implies the truth of p.

### C. A. T. Robertson

Robertson says concerning these conditionals:

- (4) This theory in brief is that there are four classes of conditions which fall into two groups or types. The two types are the deter-

<sup>6</sup>Goodwin, “Conditional Sentences in Greek Syntax,” in *Journal of Philology* 15 (1874) 189–90.

<sup>7</sup>Gildersleeve, “Studies in Pindaric Syntax,” in *American Journal of Philology* 3 (1882) 435.



mined [ἐἰ p,q is in this group] and the undetermined [ἐάν p,q is in this group]. The point in “determined” [ἐἰ p,q] is that the premise or condition is *assumed* to be true. . . . The indicative is used for this type . . . The other type is the undetermined condition. Naturally the indicative is not allowed here. The element of uncertainty calls for the subj. or the optative. . . .<sup>8</sup> In broad outline these four classes of conditions may be termed Reality [ἐἰ p,q], Unreality, Probability [ἐάν p,q] and Possibility. . . . This brings us to the other theory . . . expounded by Goodwin. . . . Goodwin confuses the “fact” with the “statement” of the fact. He describes his first condition thus: “When the protasis *simply states* a present or past particular supposition, implying nothing as to the fulfillment of the condition, it takes a present or past tense of the indicative with ἐἰ.” The words to which I object . . . are “implying nothing as to the fulfillment of the condition.” This condition [ἐἰ p,q] *pointedly* implies the fulfillment of the condition. . . . This is the *crux* of the whole matter<sup>9</sup> (Robertson’s emphasis).

Robertson moderates his stance slightly to account for the many examples in which ἐἰ p,q clearly does not imply truth of the proposition in the protasis. Such an instance is Matt 12:27, where Jesus says, “If [ἐἰ] I cast out demons by Beelzebul . . .” Concerning this Robertson says,

- (5) This class of condition [ἐἰ p,q] assumes the condition to be a reality and the conclusion follows logically and naturally from that assumption . . . This condition therefore, taken at face value, assumes the condition to be true. The context or other light must determine the actual situation. This is a good example (cf. also Gal 5:11) to begin with, since the assumption is untrue in fact, though assumed to be true by Jesus for sake of argument.<sup>10</sup>

What Robertson is saying here is that Matt 12:27 should be translated, “Assuming for the moment that I do cast out demons by Beelzebul . . .” instead of with the causative, “Since I cast out demons by Beelzebul . . .” In this statement Robertson makes it clear that he is not asserting that the propositions in the protasis are in fact true.

However, Robertson’s claims are vague and untestable. He calls the condition of the type ἐἰ p,q “determined,” in contrast to “undetermined.” He calls it a condition of “reality,” in contrast to “possibility.” He says that this condition assumes the premise to be true, in another that it pointedly implies the fulfillment of the condition and finally that

<sup>8</sup>Robertson, *Greek Grammar* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 1004.

<sup>9</sup>Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 1005–6.

<sup>10</sup>Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 1007–8.

it assumes the condition to be a reality. Apparently misunderstanding Robertson, some pedagogical grammars, which claim Robertson as their authority, have gone so far as to identify conditionals of the form εἰ p,q with causal constructions.

### D. *The Claim of Summer's Pedagogical Grammar*

Only one of the pedagogical grammars is quoted here as an example of what some of Robertson's followers claim. Others may be examined by the interested reader.<sup>11</sup> Ray Summers, in his pedagogical grammar says,

- (6) The first class condition [εἰ p,q] *affirms* the reality of the condition . . . "εἰ μαθεταὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἔσμεν σωθήσεται" . . . This construction is best translated, "Since we are disciples of the Lord, we shall be saved."<sup>12</sup>

### E. *Boyer's Rebuttal*

Boyer attributes much of the confusion in this argument to Robertson's unclear terminology. Furthermore, he notes that Robertson is inconsistent in the application of his theory to conditionals in his commentary *Word Pictures*. In *Word Pictures* sometimes Robertson notes that a protasis is assumed true, but in many cases where it is obviously false, he fails to mention that a first class conditional is used in the Greek.<sup>13</sup>

Boyer sought to bring some focus to this debate by examining all of the conditionals in the New Testament. He used *gramcord* to search the New Testament for all the examples of each kind of condition.<sup>14</sup> He then sorted first class conditionals into three groups: (1) instances where the condition was obviously true, (2) instances where the condition was obviously false, (3) instances where the condition was undetermined. According to his classification, 115 of the condition in the NT are obviously true and 36 are obviously false.<sup>15</sup> He considers these

<sup>11</sup>Some other grammars which assert claims like Summers' are: F. Blass, A. Debrunner and R. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University Press, 1961); H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957); Huber L. Drumwright, *An Introduction to New Testament Greek* (Nashville: Broadman, 1980).

<sup>12</sup>Ray Summers, *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (Nashville: Broadman, 1950) 108-9.

<sup>13</sup>Boyer, "First Class Conditionals," *GTJ* 2.1 (1981) 79-80.

<sup>14</sup>Boyer's work is reported in four articles in *Grace Theological Journal*. In addition to the one cited above there are: "Second Class Conditions in New Testament Greek," 3.1 (1982) 81-88; "Third (and Fourth) Class Conditionals," 3.2 (1982) 163-75; "Other Conditional Elements in New Testament Greek," 4.2 (1983) 173-88.

<sup>15</sup>Boyer, "First Class Conditionals," *GTJ* 2.1 (1981) 76.

36 conditions in the obviously false category to be counterexamples to those who would translate the  $\epsilon\iota$   $p, q$  with "since."

Boyer's work is exhaustive and convincing. However, there is still an element of uncertainty in Boyer's analysis because the methodology by which he separated the conditions into categories of "obviously true" and "obviously false" is apparently his own intuition. There are many examples in his obviously false category concerning which it is not so obvious that they are false. For example:

(7a) If [ $\epsilon\iota$ ] you are the Christ, tell us. Luke 22:67

(7b) If [ $\epsilon\iota$ ] to others I am not an apostle, yet I am to you. 1 Cor 9:2

In sentence (7a), Jesus was in fact the Christ, though the speakers of this sentence may not have believed He was. In (7b) there were in fact others who believed Paul was not an apostle, which makes the protasis in fact true, even though Paul was in fact an apostle and believed himself to be one.

#### IV. GRICEAN DESCRIPTIVE APPARATUS

Significant progress has been made in linguistic description in the past two decades in the area of implications. The work of H. P. Grice<sup>16</sup> is foundational in this area. Many unambiguous tests for identifying and proving the existence of implicatures<sup>17</sup> have been developed. One of these tests will aid us in this endeavor.<sup>18</sup>

Grice made a useful distinction between two kinds of implicature: conventional implicature and conversational implicature. A conventional implicature is one which is associated with the meaning of the words and the grammar of a sentence, which cannot be canceled by the context. For example, factive verbs<sup>19</sup> have the conventional implicature

<sup>16</sup>See n. 5 above.

<sup>17</sup>Grice defined the term "implicature" saying, "I wish to introduce as terms of art, the verb *implicate* and the related nouns *implicature* (cf. *implying*) and *implicatum* (cf. *what is implied*). The point of this maneuver is to avoid having, on each occasion, to choose between this or that member of the family of verbs for which implicature is to do general duty" (Grice [1975] 43, 44). Generally speaking, one may think of an implicature as an implication. But Grice introduced this unique term, because terms like "implication," "presupposition," and "assumption" have been used for a variety of different and poorly defined uses.

<sup>18</sup>Some helpful introductory texts on Gricean implicature are: Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1983) 97–166; John Lyons, *Semantics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1977) 592–606; John McCawley, *Everything that Linguists Have Always Wanted to Know About Logic* (Chicago: University Press, 1981) 214–34.

<sup>19</sup>Factive verbs are verbs which presuppose the truth of their complements. This class of verbs was first identified by Paul and Carol Kiparsky in their article "Fact" in *Progress in Linguistics*, ed. M. Bierwisch and K. Heidolf (The Hague: Mouton, 1970)

that the proposition in their complement is true. Evaluative verbs<sup>20</sup> have a conversational implicature that the proposition in their complement is true. Consider the following sentences with the factive verb "regret" and the evaluative verb "criticize."

(8a) I regretted that John told a lie.

(8b) I criticized John for telling a lie.

The complement's proposition in both cases is the same: "John told a lie." But what about the implicatures? Does a person who utters (8a) or (8b) implicate that John told a lie? It may seem that both sentences do, but on closer inspection we find that they are different with respect to implicature.

A common test for implicature is to place the utterance in a context which attempts to cancel the implicature. If a sentence with a conventional implicature is placed in a context which attempts to cancel the implicature, a pragmatically ill-formed sentence results. If a sentence with a conversational implicature is placed in a context which attempts to cancel the implicature, the implicature is canceled and the sentence remains well formed. For example the sentences in (8) are put in such contexts in (9) below.

(9a) #I regretted that John told a lie, but I shouldn't have regretted it because it was Joe who lied.

(9b) I criticized John for telling a lie, but I shouldn't have criticized him because it was Joe who lied.

I use a pound symbol (#) to the left of a sentence to indicate that the sentence is pragmatically ill-formed. Since (9a) is ill-formed, this proves that the sentence (8a) has a conventional implicature that John told a lie. In sentence (9b) the implicature that John told a lie is canceled by the

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143-73. Some examples of factive verbs in English which take object clause complements introduced by *that* are: *regret*, *resent*, *deplore*, *be odd*, *be glad*. Some examples of factive verbs in Greek which take object clause complements introduced by *ὅτι* are: *θαυμάζω*, *λανθάνω*, *χαίρω*, *λυπέομαι*, *μεταμέλομαι*. See L. W. Ledgerwood, "Syntactic Insulation of Factive Clauses," in *The Journal of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest* 5.2 (1982) 105, 112.

<sup>20</sup>Evaluative verbs are verbs like *criticize*, *accuse*, *praise*, *congratulate*. Filmore first identified this class of verbs in C. Filmore, "An Exercise in Semantic Description," in *Studies in Linguistic Semantics*, ed. C. J. Filmore and D. T. Langendoen (New York: Holt, 1972) 273-89. Karttunen and Peters showed that the implicature associated with them was not conventional but conversational. Lauri Karttunen and Stanley Peters, "Conventional Implicature," in *Syntax and Semantics 9, Presupposition* (New York: Academic, 1979).

context without resulting in a pragmatically ill-formed sentence. Therefore the implicature in (8b) was a conversational implicature.<sup>21</sup>

English causal sentences have a conventional implicature that the proposition in their protasis is true but English conditionals do not. Sentences (10) below illustrate this. Sentence (10a) implicates conventionally that the moon is full, but sentence (10b) does not.

(10a) Since the moon is full, it is opposite the sun.

(10b) If the moon is full, it is opposite the sun.

To speakers of English this seems intuitively obvious. However, this claim may be moved beyond the realm of intuition by placing both sentences in a context that attempts to cancel the implicature as shown in sentences (11) below.

(11a) #Since the moon is full, it is opposite the sun; but the moon is not full today.

(11b) If the moon is full, it is opposite the sun; but the moon is not full today.

This suggests a way to formulate a test of Summers' claim that  $\text{ei } p, q$  is best translated with English "since  $p, q$ ." Summers' claim entails  $\text{ei } p, q$

<sup>21</sup>By using Gricean terminology in this paper I do not mean to imply that Grice has said the last word on implicature. There have been challenges to Grice's methodology.

Most recently several books and papers have appeared proposing relevance theory as superior to the Gricean framework. Relevance theory and discussions of the problems with Grice's theory are contained in: Dianne Blakemore, "The Organization of Discourse," in *Linguistics, The Cambridge Survey Vol. 4*, ed. Frederick J. Newmeyer (Cambridge: University Press, 1988); Dianne Blakemore, *Semantic Constraints on Relevance* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1987); Ruth Kempson, "Grammar and Conversational Principles," in *Linguistics, The Cambridge Survey Vol. 1*, ed. Frederick J. Newmeyer (Cambridge: University Press, 1988); D. Sperber and D. Wilson, *Relevance, Communication and Cognition* (Oxford, Blackwells, 1986).

Two comments are offered in defense of applying Gricean terminology in this paper. First, most of the challenges to Grice's work have come in the area of what he called conversational implicatures (for example, Jerrold M. Sadock, "On Testing for Conversational Implicature," in *Syntax and Semantics 9, Pragmatics*, ed. P. Cole [New York: Academic, 1977]). The notion of conversational implicature is not used in this paper; conventional implicatures are. (For more on conventional implicature see the following papers by Lauri Karttunen and Stanley Peters: "Requiem for Presupposition," in *Papers from the Third Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*, 360–71; "Conventional Implicature," in *Syntax and Semantics 11, Presupposition* (New York: Academic, 1979); "Presuppositions of Compound Sentences," in *Linguistic Inquiry*, vol. 4 (1973) 169–93. Secondly, the goal of this paper is to show that by making use of a methodology like that of Grice, one can formulate clear and testable hypotheses which facilitate communication and advance research in applied areas such as this. These arguments could be reformulated in terms of relevance theory without changing the result.

having a conventional implicature that the proposition  $p$  is true. Summers' claim can be formulated in a hypothesis based on this entailment:

- (12) Summers' hypothesis: Sentences of the form  $\epsilon i$   $p, q$  have the conventional implicature that  $p$  is true.

Formulating his hypothesis in this manner yields one that is very testable. If indeed  $\epsilon i$   $p, q$  does have a conventional implicature that the proposition  $p$  is true, then it will not occur in contexts which cancel implicature.

In an investigation of Koine Greek, it is not possible to record speech of native speakers nor to quiz them concerning their intuitions about their language. So, a disciplined methodology is needed for testing hypotheses from texts. David Lightfoot says in his *Principles of Diachronic Syntax*,<sup>22</sup> "One can never demonstrate the truth of a theory, only its falsity. Thus progress in scientific endeavors can be viewed as the successive elimination of theories shown by empirical investigation to be false." I take this somewhat Popperian view of scientific progress to be axiomatic. Thus the historical grammarian's goal is to formulate hypotheses that are well enough defined that they can be proven false. No hypotheses will ever be proven true in an inductive endeavor such as this; they will only be supported by arguments from silence. The confidence that may be placed in a hypothesis will be a function of how "silent" the text is; that is, of how many possibilities were examined in which the hypothesis could have been proven false and was not.

Large volumes of Greek texts must be searched to find whether  $\epsilon i$   $p, q$  occurs in contexts which cancel the implicature. If  $\epsilon i$   $p, q$  is not found in such contexts, then this will be an argument from silence that it contains a conventional implicature. This is a weak argument. But if  $\epsilon i$   $p, q$  is ever found in a context in which the implicature is canceled, then it will be proven that the  $\epsilon i$   $p, q$  does not have a conventional implicature that  $p$  is true.

A systematic way of searching large amounts of text to look for examples like this is to imagine discourse forms which always cancel the proposition in the protasis. Sometimes this process can be made regular enough that a computer may be used to do some of the searching for such occurrences. For example, two conditionals linked by an adversative or disjunctive with the second protasis negated is such a construction.

<sup>22</sup>David Lightfoot, *Principles of Diachronic Syntax* (Cambridge: University Press, 1974) 74f.

- (13) if p then q but if not p then r

Another construction which cancels the proposition in the protasis is a modus tolens argument which has the form:

- (14) if p then q, but not q, therefore not p

#### V. TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS

The first two books of Arrian's Discourses of Epictetus,<sup>23</sup> the Cynic Epistles<sup>24</sup> and the New Testament, all dating from around the first century A.D., have been searched for examples in which a conditional of the form  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q occurs in a context in which the proposition p is negated. Such examples are abundant. Following are some of them.<sup>25</sup>

#### A. Examples of the Form $\epsilon\iota$ p,q but $\epsilon\iota$ not p,r

- (15a)  $\epsilon\iota$  γὰρ μὴ εἰσὶν Θεοί, πῶς ἔστι τέλος ἔπεσθαι Θεοῖς;  $\epsilon\iota$  δ' εἰσὶν μὲν, μηδενὸς δ' ἐπιμελούμενοι, καὶ οὕτως πῶς ὑγιὲς ἔσται;  
For if [ $\epsilon\iota$ ] there are not gods, how is it an end to serve gods?  
But if [ $\epsilon\iota$ ] there are and they don't care, how will this be sound?

Epictetus I.12.4

- (15b)  $\epsilon\iota$  μὲν οὖν ἀδικῶ καὶ ἄξιον θανάτου πέπραχά τι, οὐ παραιτοῦμαι τὸ ἀποθανεῖν,  $\epsilon\iota$  δὲ οὐδέν ἐστιν . . .  
If [ $\epsilon\iota$ ] I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if [ $\epsilon\iota$ ] none of those things are true . . .

(Acts 25:11)

Note that in both of these cases, translation with "since" is not possible because the conventional implicature that "since" generates is canceled.

- (16a) #Since there are not gods . . . , but since there are . . .

- (16b) #Since I am a wrongdoer . . . , but since none of these things are true . . .

<sup>23</sup>Epictetus in *Epictetus, the Discourses as Reported by Arian*, T. E. Page et al., eds. (Cambridge: Harvard, 1967). Also the machine readable text of Epictetus' Discourses encoded in the Thesaurus Linguae Graeca database at the University of California at Irvine was used.

<sup>24</sup>Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977).

<sup>25</sup>Other examples not listed here are: Epictetus I.12.4, I.29.7, II.1.17, II.2.24, II.4.4, II.5.25, II.10.13, II.15.6; Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles*, Crates 30, p. 80, l. 6; 35, p. 88, l. 19; Diogenes 5, p. 96, l. 1; 24, p. 116, l. 10. In the NT see Matt 12:27–28, 26:39–40; Luke 11:19–20; John 10:37; 18:23; 1 Cor 9:17; James 2:2–9.

### B. An Example of a *Modus Tolens* Argument

- (17) Εἰ δὲ ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔστιν, οὐδὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται . . . Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν . . .

But [εἰ] if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. . . . But now Christ has been raised from the dead. . . .

1 Cor 15:13, 20

Note that the argument makes no sense if εἰ is translated with "since" because Paul intends for the Corinthians to deduce that there is a resurrection of the dead.

- (18) #Since there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised . . . But now Christ has been raised from the dead.

Examples such as these disprove the Summers hypothesis as formulated above. That is, they prove that conditionals of the form εἰ p,q do not have the conventional implicature that the proposition p is true. Therefore the English causal "since p,q" is not a good translation for εἰ p,q across the board.

### C. Examples of εἰ p,q in which p Is True

Nevertheless, sometimes there are cases in which conditionals of the form εἰ p,q can be translated with English "since." Following are two such examples.<sup>26</sup>

- (19a) εἰ ἐμὲ ἐδίωξαν, καὶ ὑμᾶς διώξουσιν.

If [εἰ] they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

John 15:20

- (19b) Εἰ δὲ καλὸς ἦν Πλάτων καὶ ἰσχυρός, ἔδει καὶ καθήμενον ἐκπονεῖν, ἵνα καλὸς γένωμαι ἢ ἵνα ἰσχυρός, ὥς τοῦτο ἀναγκαῖον πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν, ἐπεὶ τις φιλόσοφος ἅμα καὶ καλὸς ἦν καὶ φιλόσοφος;

Now if [εἰ] Plato was handsome and strong, is it necessary for me to sit down and strive to become handsome or strong on the assumption that this is necessary for philosophy, since [ἐπεὶ] some philosopher was at the same time both handsome and strong?

Epictetus I.8.13

<sup>26</sup>For other examples in which the proposition in the protasis is true and translation with "since" is possible, see Malherbe, *Cynic Epistles*, Crates 30, p. 80 l. 8 and Sophocles Fr. 877N (sentence 28 in this paper); Rom 3:29, 30; 11:21.



Translations with “since p,q” are appropriate for these examples as shown in sentences (20) below.

(20a) Since they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

(20b) Since Plato was handsome and strong . . .

To the people who originally heard these utterances, and to those who are acquainted with Jesus’ life and Plato’s physique, it is generally known that Jesus was in fact persecuted and that Plato was in fact handsome and strong. That is, it is known from other sources that the proposition in the protasis is true. For this reason, translation with “since p,q” is acceptable, because the implicature generated by “since” does not conflict with the known facts of the case. In all the cases in the corpus under investigation where “since p,q” may be used to translate  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q, it is clear from the context that p is true. The truth of p comes from the context, not from a supposed implicature associated with  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q.

But the fact that  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q sometimes can and sometimes cannot be translated with “since p,q” indicates that there is something else going on in these conditionals other than conventional implicature and for this reason it is not appropriate to recommend a translation of  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q as “since p,q.”

Why does  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q have this on again-off again implicature? Why don’t such implicatures occur with  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q? These are not the subject of this paper. Answers to these questions have been proposed elsewhere.<sup>27</sup> What this paper claims to offer is unambiguous proof that the first class conditional does not conventionally implicate the truth of its protasis.

The following quotes from ancient Greek grammarians show that they agree with this conclusion.

#### VI. TESTIMONY OF THE ANCIENT GREEK GRAMMARIANS

Passages from four ancient Greek grammarians are presented below. The grammarians are:<sup>28</sup>

Dionysius Thrax	(1st century B.C.)
Apollonius Dyscolus	(2nd century A.D.)
Stephanos	(Byzantine period)
Heliodorus	(Byzantine period)

<sup>27</sup>Unpublished proposal presented by L. W. Ledgerwood at the 1989 meeting of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest in San Antonio, TX, and the 1990 AAR/SBL meeting in New Orleans, LA.

<sup>28</sup>The text used is found in G. Uhlig, *Grammatici Graeci I I/II, Dionysii Thracis and Grammatici Graeci, II II/III, Apollonii Dyscoli* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1878–1910, reprinted 1965). The English translations are original.

Dionysius is the father of western grammatical tradition; however, his work is quite short. Stephanos and Heliodorus wrote commentaries on Dionysius' grammar which flesh out his arguments with example sentences. Apollonius wrote the most voluminous and original grammar of the four. We will examine Dionysius and his commentators first, then Apollonius.

#### A. *Dionysius Thrax*

Dionysius classed conditional and causal particles (εἰ "if," ἐπεὶ "since," ἔάν "if") along with conjunctions (καί "and," ἢ "or," δέ "but," etc.). He has only one short passage on conjunctions. The portion of this dealing with conditionals and causals is listed below.

If Dionysius' account seems unclear, his commentators adequately explain his meaning.

- (21) Conditional particles are those which do not assert existence, but they signify consequence. They are: εἰ, εἴπερ, εἰδή, εἰδήπερ.

Causal connective particles are those which assert order along with existence. They are ἐπεὶ, ἐπείπερ, ἐπειδή, ἐπειδήπερ.

Expletive conjunctions are those which are used on account of meter or adornment. They are: δῆ, ῥά, νύ, ποῦ, τοί, θήν, ἄρ, δῆτα, πέρ, πῶ, μὴν, ἄν, νῦν, οὖν, κέν, γέ (20.3.4,8).

Note that Dionysius does not discuss the conditional particle ἔάν. ἔάν is constructed from εἰ plus the modal particle ἄν. He mentions the modal particle ἄν under Expletive Conjunctions.<sup>29</sup>

#### B. *Dionysius' Commentators, Stephanos and Heliodorus*

- (22) The conditional particles differ from the causal connective particles as follows: the conditional particles only connect propositions, they do not affirm the reality. For example, if I say, "If [εἰ] the sun is over the land," it is not clear whether the sun is over the land. But the causal connective particle, in addition signifying consequence and connecting to another proposition

<sup>29</sup>Dionysius has lumped a lot of different types of particles into his "Expletive Conjunctions." His statement about them indicates that he considers that they add little or no meaning to a text. Rather, they are added simply to make meter (i.e., in poetry) come out right and to add adornment. It seems that he really did not know what to do with these. Apollonius discusses a theory which said that expletive conjunctions merely "fill up the empty holes in a text" and takes strong objection to this theory. He says that each of the expletive conjunctions adds some special meaning such as "transition in logic" for δῆ, "moderation" for γέ, etc. (III.127-29). Unfortunately, he does not tell us what the special meaning of ἄν or ἔάν is.

also affirms the reality, for example, "since [ἐπεὶ] the sun is over the land, it is day" (Stephanos, in Uhlig 1965 I/III, p. 284.30).

- (23) Of the conjunctions, some assert existence, others assert order and others both. Coordinating conjunctions [i.e., καί "and"] assert existence. For example, if I say, "God and day and justice exist," everything is affirmed.<sup>30</sup> The conditional particles disclose order. For example, if I say, "If I am walking I am moving," the sentence holds consequence, but it is not also affirmed; for I can say this while I am sitting. But if I turn it around, the truth is destroyed. For example, "Whenever [ὅταν] I am moving, I am walking" is not true, for it is possible for me, while sitting, to move something. The causal connective particles have both the reality of the coordinating conjunctions and the order of the conditional particles; for "Since [ἐπεὶ] I am walking, I am moving" is both affirmed and has order. In the same way, it being turned around is no longer true (Stephanos, in Uhlig 1965 I/III, p. 286.5).
- (24) The difference between the coordinating conjunction and the conditional particle is this: the coordinating conjunctions have the force of reality but they are unordered with respect to the flow of speech. For example, "I am walking and I am thinking," and the reverse, "I am thinking and I am walking."<sup>31</sup> But the conditional particles do not affirm the force of reality; rather they affirm the consequence of the expression and they preserve the order. For example, "If [εἰ] I shall walk, I shall be moving." But I may not say, "If [εἰ] I shall be moving, I shall be walking," for it is false (Heliodorus in Uhlig 1965 I/III 105.10).
- (25) The conditional conjunction stands in place of ἕάν, in "If [εἰ] there is light, it is day." . . . It also, stands in place of the causal connective particle ἐπεὶ in, "Since [εἰ] you have done terrible things, you must suffer terrible things."

One must see that the causal connective particles have this much more than the conditional particles, they not only have

<sup>30</sup>By "Everything is affirmed," Stephanos means that a person who utters the phrase, "God and day and justice exist," is asserting that God exists, it is presently day and justice is presently occurring. On the contrary, a person saying, "If I am walking, I am moving," does not assert that he is presently walking or moving.

<sup>31</sup>Heliodorus is saying that with the conjunction καί ("and") it does not matter what order the propositions come in. Thus, "I am walking and I am thinking" means the same as "I am thinking and I am walking." However, in the case of the conjunction εἰ, changing the order changes the meaning.

consequence and order, but also they indicate the existence of reality. For I may say, "Since [ἐπεὶ] it is day, there is light," . . . and there is not uncertainty as with the conditional particle (Heliodorus in Uhlig 1965 I/III, pp. 439.4–11).

Dionysius and his commentators address specifically the questions of implicata of Greek conditionals. They here are interested in two properties of the so-called conjunctions. These are: (1) existence and (2) what they refer to as consequence and order. The following definitions of these terms are proposed for these passages.

- Existence: Uttering the phrase implies that the propositions joined by the conjunction are true in reality.  
 Consequence: There is a logical or causal relationship between the phrases joined by the conjunction.  
 Order: The linear order of the propositions in speech flow is significant. The order cannot be reversed.

The Greek grammarians quoted above tell us that their so-called conjunctions have the following properties:

Conjunction	Properties
Coordinating Conj. (καί, and)	existence
Conditional Conj. (εἰ, if)	consequence and order
Causal Conj. (ἐπεὶ, since)	existence, consequence and order

The examples they give leave no doubt as to their conclusion. Stephanos gives the sentences:

(26a) If [εἰ] the sun is over the land, it is day.

(26b) Since [ἐπεὶ] the sun is over the land, it is day.

He says that (26a) does not imply that the sun is over the land while (26b) does.

Of particular interest is Heliodorus statement in quote (25) above. He says that εἰ may be used in place of εἰάν and gives an example repeated as (27) below and that ἐπεὶ may be used in place of ἐπεὶ and gives an example repeated in (28) below.

(27) If [εἰ] there is light, there is day.

(28) Since [ἐπεὶ] you have done terrible things, you must suffer terrible things (Soph Fr 877 N).

Sentence (27) is a statement of general truth. It does not assert that it is necessarily day or not, it just asserts the entailment that whenever it is

light, it is day. It seems that Heliodorus considers it more natural to make such a generalized statement in Greek with  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q (what Goodwin called the present general condition:  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  and the present subjunctive in the protasis and a present indicative in the apodosis). But he gives sentence (27) as an example of a case in which  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q means the same as the present general condition  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q. Sentence (28) is an example of  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q being used in a context in which it is clear that p is true. In this example, he says that  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q means about the same as  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota$  p,q.

Yet, he cannot mean that  $\epsilon\iota$  and  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota$  are equivalent in meaning, for he says clearly in other passages that  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota$  p,q implies that the proposition p is true in reality while  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q does not. He just observes, as has been observed above (pp. 110–11), that  $\epsilon\iota$  can sometimes be used where the causal could also be used.

*C. Apollonius Dyscolus (from Syntax, Book III)*<sup>32</sup>

In the following passage Apollonius is discussing the origin of the names of the moods. Previous to this passage, he has dealt with the indicative and optative and shown that these names (“Indicative” and “Optative”) come from the meaning of the mood. But in the case of the subjunctive, the term subjunctive does not refer to a quality of its meaning, but to its syntax. That is, it occurs primarily in clauses that are subjected (i.e., subordinated) to another clause and it got its name from this property. Specifically here he is refuting the theory that the subjunctive should be called the dubative.

This naming theory is relevant to the discussion at hand in that Apollonius asserts that conditionals with  $\epsilon\iota$  and  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  have about the same degree of doubt. Furthermore, he is the only grammarian to say anything substantive about the conditional  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q.

(29) Next it is necessary to speak about the subjunctive mood which some call dubative because of its meaning, just as also the previously mentioned moods have received their names. For it is clear that “If [ $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$ ] I ever write” and the like express a doubt concerning a future matter.

But perhaps someone will object that these [i.e., the moods] are not the source of the sense of doubt, but the accompanying conjunction is the source of doubt. Now, if it is reason-

<sup>32</sup>Two very helpful works on Apollonius have recently appeared. They are: David L. Blank, *Ancient Philosophy and Grammar, The Syntax of Apollonius Dyscolus* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1982); and a translation of Apollonius' extant books on syntax in F. W. Householder, *The Syntax of Apollonius Dyscolus* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1981). Another helpful work discussing Apollonius' model of AN is R. Camerer, “Die Behandlung der Parikel AN in den Schritten des Apollonius Dyskolos,” in *Hermes* 93 (1965) 168–204.

able to name verb forms after the meaning of their conjunctions, then nothing prevents us from changing the names of the other moods also when they receive this meaning from their conjunctions. . . . Roughly speaking, "If [εἰ] you are talking you are moving" falls under the same doubt as "If [ἐάν] you walk you will move," but "If [εἰ] you are walking" is not called dubative (3.123–24).

Apollonius' point is that an indicative introduced by εἰ is just as dubative as a subjunctive introduced by ἐάν. Therefore the source of the dubative meaning is not the mood (subjunctive or indicative) but the conjunction (ἐάν or εἰ) is the source. This is important for evaluating Robertson's model of Greek conditionals, because Robertson bases his classification of conditionals primarily on the distinctions between the moods accompanying the conjunction.

In the following passages, Apollonius gives us an interesting statement concerning the tenses which are grammatical with ἐάν p,q.

- (30) The above-mentioned mood [the subjunctive] with the conjunction ἐάν and its equivalents<sup>33</sup> is accompanied by the future or present tense. For example, "If [ἐάν] I study Dion will come," and "If [ἐάν] I ever read, Tryphon comes." For a past tense is ungrammatical (3.131).
- (31) It is necessary also to examine the syntax of the conjunctions, to determine why they refuse the endings of the past tense. For the syntax of "If [ἐάν] I was saying" is not acceptable, or "If [ἐάν] I have trusted"<sup>34</sup> and the like . . . It is evident that the cause of such ungrammaticality is the conflict of the past tense with the meaning of the conjunction. For they present a doubt about coming matters and also about those matters to be completed. . . .

<sup>33</sup>One would like very much to know what Apollonius meant by "Its equivalents" (ἰσοδυναμούντων). He probably means the terms ἐάν, ἐάνπερ ("if indeed") and the like, since Dionysius classes εἰ with εἴπερ, etc. However, would Apollonius include ὅταν ("whenever") in this class? Both ἐάν and ὅταν are constructed by adding ἄν to another particle. ἐάν comes from εἰ + ἄν; ὅταν comes from ὅτε + ἄν. Both ἐάν and ὅταν take the subjunctive. ὅταν is frequently interchangeable with ἐάν. (For example, note that Stephanos uses ὅταν for ἐάν [quote (23) above].) In spite of these similarities, there are examples of ὅταν with the indicative, used to express an iterative sense, which cannot be written off as grammatical quirks. See for example: Polybius IV.32.5, Ignatius Eph 8:1, Exod 17:11 (LXX), Num 11:9 (LXX), 1 Sam 17:34 (LXX), Ps 119:7 (LXX), Mark 3:11, 11:19. Apollonius does not tell us what he thinks about such uses of ὅταν.

<sup>34</sup>"If I was saying" (ἐάν ἔλεγον) is ἐάν plus an imperfect indicative verb. "If I have trusted" (ἐάν πέποιθα) is ἐάν plus a perfect indicative verb. One would have to use the conjunction εἰ instead of ἐάν to make these sentences grammatical in Greek. For ἐάν to be used grammatically, it must be used with a subjunctive, which is atemporal.

Because how can that which has happened be brought together with that which is coming? (3.137–138).

In the quote (30), Apollonius is saying that in  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q, the proposition q cannot be in the past tense of the indicative. In the quote (31), he is saying that the proposition p may not be in the past tense of the indicative. This second statement seems a bit odd, because  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  is not supposed to have any form of the indicative in the protasis proposition p, no matter what tense.<sup>35</sup>

The import of this passage for this investigation is as follows. Apollonius said earlier that  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q and  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q have about the same degree of doubt, but in this passage he seems to consider  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  p,q more dubitative in some way than  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q, though he does not explicitly say so. For he says that there is a conflict between the meaning of the past tense and the meaning of the conjunction  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$ . But he and we both know that the conditional  $\epsilon\iota$  can be constructed with past tense indicatives in either the protasis or apodosis. So, either  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  seems more dubitative to him in some way than  $\epsilon\iota$ , or he had not thought out thoroughly the consequences of his statement.

#### VII. CONCLUSIONS

It has been proven, and the ancient Greek grammarians agree, that a conditional of the form  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q does not have a conventional implicature that the proposition p is true.

Conditionals of the form  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q should not be translated across the board with the English causal "since p,q." Such a translation is appropriate in some cases, but is not in the majority. In the few cases that  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q can be translated with "since p,q," the English "if p,q" will also be appropriate because, in these cases the context carries the implication that the proposition p is true. The use of English "since p,q" in these cases only adds redundancy.

Robertson's assertions are unclear. The way that he is interpreted by some today yields an erroneous analysis of conditionals. Robertson claims to be in the tradition of Gildersleeve; however, he went farther than Gildersleeve went. Gildersleeve never said that  $\epsilon\iota$  p,q implies the

<sup>35</sup>It is noted here that in Apollonius' day, significant diachronic changes in the syntax of conditionals were occurring. The conditional  $\epsilon\iota$  was dying out and the conditional  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  was taking over. Not long after Apollonius' day,  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  came to be used with the indicative (see A. N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar* [Hildesheim: George Olms, 1968] §§ 1772 and 1987). There are some examples of  $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\alpha}\nu$  used with the indicative in the NT (1 Thess 3:8, 1 John 5:15, Luke 19:40, Acts 8:31). These may be a reflection of this change. However, these grammarians were writing about the classical forms of their language, the language as they felt it should be. At any rate, diachronic factors are neglected in this paper for simplicity.

proposition  $p$  is true; some read Robertson as saying that it does. The ancient Greek grammarians disagree with Robertson and those in his tradition, but they do not disagree with either Goodwin's or Gildersleeve's claims. Goodwin and Gildersleeve were writing more about aspectual and temporal interpretations than about implications concerning truth.

Bible students should not be taught that  $\epsilon\iota\ p,q$  means "since  $p,q$ ." Exegetes should be honest in their hermeneutics and should refrain from stating or implying in an exegesis of a passage that the Greek conditional  $\epsilon\iota\ p,q$  itself implies that  $p$  is true. Nor should an exegete state that  $\epsilon\iota\ p,q$  does not imply doubt like English "if  $p,q$ " can and that it would be better translated with "since  $p,q$ ." In those cases where one wishes to make a point that the proposition  $p$  is not being called into question, it should be demonstrated that the context implies that the proposition  $p$  is true or that the participants in the communication knew that  $p$  was true in fact.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Message of Genesis 1-11*, by David Atkinson. In *The Bible Speaks Today* series, edited by J. A. Motyer (OT Editor). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990. Pp. 190. \$12.95. Paper.

David Atkinson is Chaplain and Professor at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, England. This book is twenty-fourth in the popular series *The Bible Speaks Today*. Other authors include Derek Kidner (Jeremiah, Hosea) and John R. W. Stott (Acts, Galatians, Ephesians). The stated purpose of this series is "to expound the biblical text with accuracy, to relate it to contemporary life, and to be readable" (p. 5). This particular volume succeeds in all three areas.

It is Atkinson's goal to provide more personal application of Genesis than a commentary, yet more depth than a sermon. He acknowledges 38 related Genesis studies in the Bibliography and freely quotes from them; Jürgen Moltmann, Gordon Wenham, and Claus Westerman are his favorites. Atkinson avoids debate on the usual "hot spots" of Genesis: the length of creation days, theistic evolution, and the extent of the Great Flood. Instead, he approaches the text as through the eyes of the original writer, accepting it at face value. For example, regarding the Tower of Babel he writes, "The demonic powers of mob rule . . . directed to goals which can only lead inexorably to destruction, are perhaps not too far from the thoughts of their author" (p. 183). Atkinson explains the context and general meaning of each passage, then makes application. His approach is refreshing. Regarding the creation of light *before* the sun and moon, he concludes, "The writer [of Genesis] is not so stupid as to be unaware there is a problem . . . He is safeguarding and proclaiming something of the unsearchable mystery of God" (p. 17). At times the author is "soft" on origins: he suggests that evolutionary capacity may be a *gift* of God (p. 29).

Atkinson gives extended discussion of many topics: creation in God's image (p. 36), the concept of time (p. 44), marriage (p. 74). There is much original thinking in these pages which will be helpful to the pastor. The author also interacts with important global issues like nuclear arms and environmental stewardship. On this latter topic, Atkinson concludes that Christians should be responsible "estate managers . . . harnessing the resources of the world for mankind's good and God's glory" (p. 180). One theme of this book is the repeated failure of mankind to live right. The sin of Adam, Cain, Lamech, the sons of God . . . each led to punishment, although with preservation and hope for the future. In the case of the Babel dispersion, the hope is in the future blessings to Abraham. This story, beginning with Genesis 12, is left for a future volume in the series.

Considering the low price and high caliber of contributors, all of *The Bible Speaks Today* series are recommended for study. Unfortunately, these volumes do not contain any scripture, name, or author indexes.

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*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volume VI*, by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds. Translated by David E. Green. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. Pp. xxi + 491. \$39.95. Cloth.

This sixth volume of the ongoing series *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT) makes a significant contribution to the study of Hebrew lexicography and semantics. It contains 55 articles ranging from יוֹבֵל to יָתַר and its derivatives. Eight contain more than 20 pages each (יָצָא יַעֲקֹב, יָרָא יַעֲצֹן, יוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל יָרֵשׁ, and the root יָשַׁע). The root יָטַב is included in volume 5 with טוֹב, and presumably יָצַב will be included in a future volume with נָצַב. Likewise, one would expect that תוֹרָה ("law," "instruction"), an important derivative of יָרָא, will be discussed in the volume which includes *taw*. Otherwise the only omission of consequence would seem to be יֵרֵכָה/יֵרֵיכוֹ. A discussion of "Jericho" might also have been of interest.

The title "theological" is used in a broad sense of more or less significant terms that are used in the Old Testament, a manifestly theological corpus. The article on יוֹם ("day"), for example, begins with a "general usage" (a literal day, a period of time, etc.) before it sets forth a "theological usage" ("day" as an element of creation, the setting aside of special days in worship, the "day of Yahweh," etc.). As M. Sæbø, writing on יוֹם, warns, the distinction between "secular" and "religious" usage should not be made too sharply (p. 22).

While the various contributors to this volume had some freedom in organizing their articles, they generally include a section on etymology and relevant usage in the ancient Near East, the distribution of the forms within the Old Testament (by book, by sections such as "wisdom literature," and by critical categories such as the "J" document or "Deutero-Isaiah"), classification of the various usages, equivalents in the LXX, and usage at Qumran.

I have learned by experience that the *TDOT* is the best place to go for sound and thorough etymological information, and volume 6 is not disappointing in this respect. J. F. Sawyer gives compelling evidence, for example, that the root יָשַׁע has "nothing to do with Arab. *wasīʿa*, 'be spacious' (IV ʿawsaʿa, 'give room to') (p. 442). S. Wagner cautiously assigns יָרָה to three distinct roots rather than squeezing the diverse senses of "throw," "rain," and "instruct" into one root, as the BDB lexicon does.

Most of the contributors also follow a sound semantic methodology, being careful to give more weight to contextual data than to etymology. As might be expected, Sawyer's article on יָשַׁע can serve as a model for semantic analysis. By "establishing oppositions between it and other terms in the same semantic field," he shows that usually the term "implies bringing help to those in trouble rather than rescuing them from it" (p. 445). M. Görg, drawing on the insights of H. Schweizer, makes a helpful distinction between the "mansive" ("location in a particular place") and "sedative" ("cessation of movement") aspects of יָשַׁב (p. 424). He translates Ps 29:10, "Yahweh has taken his seat over the flood, and [therefore now] sits enthroned as king for ever." According to this understanding, [v]erse 10a documents the 'sedative' side of the verb's meaning, v. 10b the 'mansive' side. This reflects the notion that Yahweh, like the earthly king, takes his seat upon his throne, albeit thenceforth to exercise permanent sovereignty" (p. 437). Some writers could have made more use of

modern semantic methods than they did, but at least this latest volume of *TDOT* has overcome much of the valid criticism levied years ago by James Barr against the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich).

The writers selected for the *TDOT* are generally experts in their subject and able to discuss firsthand sources as well as very technical secondary literature. They also have a keen interest in the historical development of the usage of a biblical term, usually viewing such development within the framework of various modern critical theories. For example, N. Lohfink's 29 pages on יָרֵךְ and its derivatives seems largely concerned with the evolution of a "specialized Deuteronomistic usage." Or, H. -J. Zobel posits that the divine title "Mighty One of Jacob" goes back to "a nomadic group of herdsmen from the region around Safa tracing its origins back to Jacob." In "an entirely peaceful" process this tribe settled on both sides of the central Jordan, probably around 1800–1500 B.C. The biblical narratives about Jacob arise after "[t]he patriarchs attract to themselves the local traditions of Canaan, reshaped so that they themselves appear as the heroes" (p. 201). Such critical views permeate the articles in this volume, influencing the conclusions about semantic meaning as well. Nonetheless, where careful linguistic methods are allowed to predominate over critical speculations, helpful results are obtained.

Someone with no knowledge at all of Hebrew would probably have a difficult time navigating the *TDOT*, and I would not in general recommend it for such readers, though if they persevere they might find some real gems in selected articles. Since the *TDOT* is a reference work, an index of biblical passages cited will be a must for a future volume. In the meantime, pastors who have had minimum exposure to Hebrew (and to critical methodologies) in seminary will have to sort through much technical data before finding something useful. It would be better to bring questions to a particular article than to read that article as a whole. Helpful section headings simplify that process. The specialist in the OT or in some other branch of biblical studies will probably want to make the *TDOT* a constant companion. No other work of its kind exists.

Volume 6 is relatively free of typographical errors; a few errors of content or problematic statements are listed here:

- 1) P. 4—R. G. North seems perplexed that Lev 25:20–22 speaks of the sixth, seventh, and eighth years rather than the forty-eighth, forty-ninth, and fiftieth years, as implied by v. 11. This need not be treated as a contradiction; the main topic of the chapter is the Sabbath Year, of which the Year of Jubilee is probably a special case.
- 2) P. 91—Surely the "Elamite seacoast" is a mistake for the "Edomite seacoast."
- 3) P. 130—Note 16 refers to Wolff, but it seems to me Wolff is saying the opposite: the chastisement in Hos 7:12; 10:10 is "intended to instruct and restore the nation."
- 4) P. 147—H. D. Preuss says Job insists "that even praying to" שֶׁרִי is "profitless" (Job 21:15; cf. 22:2f.). However, it is the *wicked* who conclude prayer is without profit, not Job (see 21:14, 16).

- 5) Pp. 188, 399—H. -J. Zobel assumes that Hos 12:4 (3) takes a negative view of Jacob. This seems unlikely. More probably a contrast is intended: the refusal of Ephraim/Israel/Jacob in Hosea's day to repent versus the patriarch's change from a deceiver to one who sought God's blessing.
- 6) P. 283—S. Wagner translates כְּלִי יָקָר (Prov 20:15) by "a valuable tool." However, the contrast between the (relative) abundance of gold and rubies points rather to something like "the priceless ornament" (JB).
- 7) P. 338—Wagner will not allow any connection, "even if only through a misunderstanding," of הַמִּוֶּרֶה לְצִדְקָה (Joel 2:23) with the concept "teacher of righteousness." No emendation is required if a play on words with a term meaning "early rain" be granted, and if הַמִּוֶּרֶה be taken impersonally, "that which teaches." The rain the Lord sends on the earth is then a sign to point people to the restoration of a right covenant relationship (see Patterson, *EBC* 6; Finley, *Joel, Amos, Obadiah*, Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary).

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*Interpreting the Minor Prophets*, by Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. Pp. 308 + index. \$14.95 paper.

Collaborative research involving biblicists and literary critics has reached a crucial time as each group assesses the scholarship within its own discipline and in relation to the other. While biblical scholars consider further revision of traditional exegesis according to current literary theory, literati continue to struggle with issues such as the idea of an extrabiblical literary canon, textual meaning, and the referentiality of language. In addition, some of the latter group (including this reviewer) are seeking help from the nature and implications of the divinely inspired, inerrant Bible. Before the inquiry in both literature and biblical studies goes much further, the two disciplines need to collaborate on a solidly text-based hermeneutic that synthesizes history, theology, and literature in a reasonably systematic way.

This enterprise would benefit considerably from Chisholm's *Interpreting the Minor Prophets*. It explicates the Twelve according to historical background, literary features, and theological doctrine and therefore deserves as much notice for its methodology as for its content. From that perspective *Interpreting* is a particularly useful guide to OT studies: it models a well-conceived hermeneutic, showing in turn numerous possibilities for wide-ranging literary analysis of the primary texts. The book therefore can help to shape the interdisciplinary dialogue about the process of interpretation and the nature of textual meaning.

Evidence of this potential appears early in the book and points to other strengths in Chisholm's overall plan. In the introduction the author acknowledges the prophets' conscious artistry by describing such literary features as

chiasmus, inclusio, paneling, and wordplay. Concluding his sketch of the prophets' tendency to use the same words for double effect, Chisholm rejects the shallow aestheticism that sometimes is used to attack the integrity of the biblical text: "One can see from these examples that observing wordplays is more than an exercise in aesthetic appreciation of the text. Through wordplay the prophets often drew correspondences and contrasts that were an important emphasis of their messages" (p. 17). Those points of references, moreover, were to actual, not imaginary, events, people, and conditions in rebellious Israel and Judah. History undergirds Chisholm's treatment of literary topics, leading to an implicit rejection of the deconstructionist view that language is wholly self-referential, that the only world that exists is the "world" of language and of writing. The principle of correspondence is indeed crucial, and Chisholm's initial remarks, though brief, are especially important to the context of criticism in which he works.

The larger purpose and organization of the book have additional value, despite a practical difficulty. He intends that the book "give its reader greater appreciation for and insight into a major portion of this marvelous body of prophetic literature . . ." (p. 7). Written for English readers such as advanced undergraduates or beginning seminary students, Chisholm's prose style is extremely compact, similar to that found in well-executed Bible and theological dictionaries; his commentaries, therefore, require a carefully-paced reading. Following a brief introduction, Chapters 1–12 follow in rapid succession, each displaying a clear three-part structure: an introduction, dealing with *sitz*, outline of the book, and historical peculiarities; an explication; and a theological comment, noting specific insights gleaned from the text. This fairly rigid approach to the Twelve, treating them in the order of the English canon, should help readers keep a clear sense of things. At times, though, the compact style is almost elliptical.

Moreover, this rigid authorial stance never loosens, even for a few paragraphs. From the overview of OT prophetic literature to the closing analysis of God's justice as expressed in Malachi, details march in tight formation. Chisholm's final words, displaying his anticipation of NT teaching about a future judgment (the message of the prophets), provide a representative sample of his writing style:

The Lord would send the prophet Elijah prior to this Day of Judgment ([Malachi] 3:1; 4:5). His task would be to "prepare the way" for the Lord (3:1) by proclaiming the necessity of repentance as the only way to escape the impending judgment (4:6). According to the New Testament, John the Baptist, who came as a second Elijah (Matt. 11:14; 17:12–13; Luke 1:17), eventually emerged as the Lord's messenger prophesied here (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76; 7:27). (p. 292)

The numerous parenthetical references, despite their inelegance aesthetically and disruptiveness in the reading process, show the author's unflinching commitment to the authority of the biblical text—a welcomed position to conservative scholars and one that makes the encyclopedic tone of the book easier to manage.

Other aspects of the author's methodology deserve more unmixed commendation. His sensitivity to a biblical word or phrase as it appears in various

English translations seems timely and controlled. Particularly at textual cruxes Chisholm refers to NIV, NASB, and MT renderings, strategically locating explanations on the page: the more technical discussions are placed in footnotes (e.g., Nahum 1:8 [p. 171] and 1:15 [p. 167]) and the less complicated ones appear in-text. Examples of this second category, the one perhaps more interesting to English readers, are as follows. Nahum 2:10a, according to Chisholm, is "highlighted in Hebrew by the similarity in sound between the words used (bûqâ ûm<sup>e</sup>bûqâ ûm<sup>e</sup>bullâqâ)," this statement "emphasizing the totality of Nineveh's destruction" (p. 175). Another instance shows the prophet's artistic and didactic use of language:

Nahum emphasizes the reversal in Nineveh's fortunes through three subtle word-plays, which are apparent only in the Hebrew text. While Nineveh contained a seemingly "endless" (ʿên qêseh) supply of gold and silver (2:9), she would soon be covered with bodies "without number" (ʿên qêseh again; 3:3). "Piles" (kōb ed) of corpses (3:3) would replace her abundant "wealth" (kāb ôd, 2:9). Because of her "wanton lust," literally "many [rōb] harlotries" (3:4; cf. NASB), Nineveh would be filled with "many [rōb] casualties" (3:3). (pp. 176–77)

Here and elsewhere Chisholm's atomistic techniques bring forth a multitude of textual details, many items beyond the competence of this reviewer to judge. The book of Jonah, however, is an exception; therefore, an analysis of Chisholm's discussion of this book is offered as fairly representative of the other eleven. His expositions do equip the reader to recognize particulars that effect the interpretation of the book, thus achieving his primary intention. He could, however, use a stronger sense of the textual wholeness afforded by literary scholarship, despite its radical philosophical bent due to the aftermath of Post-Structuralism.

While Jonah is shown to be rich in irony and word play, the overall artistry of the book is somewhat unclear. Beginning with genre criticism, including a handy summary and refutation of arguments against the historicity of the text, Chisholm classifies the book as biographical narrative similar to accounts of the prophets in Kings. For some reason, though, satire is never mentioned, although the book has long been classified as such (e.g., Edwin Good, Millar Burrows, Leland Ryken, and James Ackerman). Jonah may be more than a satire anyway, but the author at least should mention that genre as part of the literary background. His silence may result from some critics' assumption that if the book is a satire, its plot is fictional, the latter opinion rejected by both Chisholm and this reviewer. Jonah is historical.

Another issue, Jonah as a heroic or antiheroic character, needs more discussion as well, though in all fairness the many complexities of this issue need additional clarification in focused, technical research. Chisholm offers no judgment about whether the protagonist is a hero or antihero (p. 120), this ambiguity perhaps resulting from the scanty attention paid earlier to genre. If the book is a satire, written within a historically accurate sequence of events (cf. Ryken), the protagonist must then be antiheroic, the primary target of the author's satiric intent; and who can read the book without realizing that Jonah's foolish acts (e.g., running from God, becoming angry because the Ninevites repent) make him the butt of satire? Much evidence supporting this view lies in

the text. But if the book is more than a satire, Jonah may be heroic or antiheroic, depending upon how the plot serves to present, analyze, and assess his character. Interpreting this tiny book is no small task.

A few other comments on the hero-antihero question may help to show both the insights and limitations of Chisholm's treatment. Jonah's divine commission, for example, makes him appear heroic. God instructs him to prophesy to the *brutal* Ninevites and to do it in *their* city, not within the safe borders of his homeland, where many other prophets were told to preach. Elsewhere Jonah appears heroic too, i.e., when he asks to be thrown overboard (1:12), though his request may be only an acknowledgment of deserved punishment rather than a desire to preserve the sailors' lives; and when he obediently delivers God's message to Nineveh (3:3), though again, as Chisholm remarks, the prophet simply may be reacting to "the most drastic divine measures" (p. 127). In any case, issues involving genre and Jonah's character await further explanation from research, though Chisholm points out many foundational details that help the reader appreciate specific literary devices in the text.

Some readers will question the analysis of structure in Jonah, particularly because a larger unity is at work in the book. Chisholm's assumption that Jonah has two principal sections (ch. 1–2, 3–4), offered without explanation, does lead to a fruitful way to study the plot. On the other hand, it severs an otherwise unbroken pattern of divine action-human reaction-divine reaction that gives the book an important rhetorical wholeness, whatever the particular chapter divisions. Another approach to the issue of structure is to treat the book as simply four chapters, with a note that the first two are divided at different places in the Hebrew and English texts. This strategy avoids much potentially useless theorizing about rationales for dividing the book at certain moments in the plot. Besides, whatever the proper divisions, the primary emphasis of the plot is God's sovereignty over human events, despite foolish decisions made by religious leaders, a truth clearly stated in Chisholm's excellent theological analysis (p. 129).

Despite these particular criticisms, the commentary is filled with vital information. Explanations about the thanksgiving psalms as background texts for Jonah 2:1–10 add important perspective to the reading of that chapter. Moreover, some statements do show a sensitivity to larger issues in the Jonah narrative. Here is one of the best: "With a final note of sarcasm the Lord reminded Jonah [4:11] that the city also contained 'many cattle.' . . . If Jonah could not feel compassion for human beings, perhaps this plant-lover might acknowledge that the city should be spared for the sake of the animals, partners with plants in the natural realm" (p. 129). God's use of nature is an important secondary theme in Jonah and Chisholm's remark provides just the right touch to encourage readers to look elsewhere for expressions of this theme.

All in all, the commentary on Jonah pinpoints numerous details that must be addressed in any penetrating study of the book. Issues involving history, literature, and theology are neatly categorized, leaving synthesis up to the reader. While this demanding task of integrating the three disciplines needs further theoretical underpinning, *Interpreting the Minor Prophets* provides much of the schemata so useful to non-specialists. Some of that group can apply *Interpreting* in their ongoing analyses of the nature, function, and criticism of

hermeneutics, especially in joint research involving literary criticism and biblical studies. Other readers seeking a deeper understanding of the Minor Prophets will find much to stimulate, challenge, and inspire their study of the numerous authorial, textual, and theological issues in this portion of the Old Testament.

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*Proverbs and Ecclesiastes: Who Knows What is Good?* by Kathleen A. Farmer. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991. Pp. 220. \$15.95. Paper.

Farmer approaches Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as books having a unity of attitude which editors joined together with an introduction (Prov 1:2-7) and a conclusion (Eccl 12:11-14). Each book is given a brief introduction since critical issues are not the intended emphasis and, in keeping with the series goals, she works conceptually within the framework of the entire Canon, although there is little developed discussion of the NT.

the first section of Farmer's book treats Proverbs 1-9 as analogous in form to Egyptian "Instructions" with twelve "instructions" being identified through variations of form and content. This analysis places great stress upon the markers "my son/sons" and excludes much of chapter 8 (the personification of wisdom) and chapter 9 from its enumeration.

Two collections of Solomonic proverbs (10-22:16 and 25-29) are joined in section two of the book in an interesting discussion by themes and topics. As Farmer shows, this really is the most rewarding way to study the book of Proverbs. topical arrangement provides a grouping of significant proverbs salted with references to Hebrew words and parallel ancient Near Eastern texts. Much less emphasis, however, is found upon integration of Old Testament ideas or development within the Canon. Some topics, i.e., life after death (Farmer leaves the door open for a possible view of immortality) are treated broadly while "Business dealings," so important for current ethical awareness, is altogether too brief with its focus upon indebtedness.

Section three comments upon the sayings of the sages with expectant emphasis upon the first group of "30 sayings." While recognizing the Hebrew text does not mark divisions Farmer accepts the analogy to Amenemope but for enumeration must combine 23:9 and 23:12 for the 9th saying while 23:10-11 is designated as the 10th saying. Sayings are analyzed in groups with emphasis given to selected topics. "Poor and Poverty," for example, receives better theological development here than in the longer treatment of the previous section.

The words of Agur and Lemuel, including the concluding acrostic on the wise woman, are the subject of the final section on Proverbs. Throughout the book excellent visibility is provided on the contrast of the Adulteress (foolishness) with Wisdom (wise woman) ending with this section. Farmer, however, struggles with the prohibitions against marrying foreign women and its application for today.



An appendix on "Theology and Piety in Proverbs" concludes the commentary on Proverbs which is quite telling as less development of the theology of Proverbs is included than expected. Throughout the book emphasis is placed upon the editors/collectors and our ability to determine their thinking as they positioned proverbs together in the book. Insightful comments are made about the juxtapositioning of dissimilar proverbs but much is made of such collecting without discussion of acceptable limits or the range of interrelationships.

A beginning study of *hebel* (Farmer follows R. B. Y. Scott's *Anchor Bible* translation "breath") sets the stage for the analysis of Ecclesiastes. Aside from the introduction and conclusion, Ecclesiastes is to be understood as primarily by one author (Qoheleth not Solomon) with editorial additions seen behind contradictory statements and changes in person. Qoheleth's style is said to be "journaling" where a "middle-class" audience is allowed to look at the contemplations of the author but no analysis of such a genre is given. Although the commentary proceeds chapter by chapter Farmer sees two main parts to the book; chapters 1-6 (what is good for humans) and chapters 7-12 (what can be known by them) concluded by an editor(s)' comments upon Qoheleth's work (12:8-14).

The theme of the book for Farmer is Qoheleth's search for which is permanent rather than what is of value. Taking her cue from an understanding of *hebel* as lack of permanence rather than lack of worth Farmer develops this theme in relating Qoheleth's search for what people can know and the limits of human knowledge including the future. Farmer, therefore, sees the essence of the fear of God not as a signal of hope in the wanderings of human existence but as recognition "that God's favor cannot be controlled by anything we humans can do," 177.

The book is enjoyable to read. Throughout the commentary Farmer refers mostly to the RSV and secondarily the TEV although frequent reference to many English versions are made. In this reviewer's opinion the topical treatments of Proverbs and the comments about their interrelatedness are the most insightful part of the book. Disappointing are the limited theological development of relevant topics (i.e., ethics, economics, family) and integration with OT/NT thought by Farmer has much to offer any reader of her work. Finally, one of the goals of this series to include a perspective from outside the "'Christian' West" is not achieved.

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*Exploring the Book of Daniel*, by John Phillips and Jerry Vines. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1990. Pp. 290. n.p. Cloth.

The Loizeaux "Exploring" series includes ten volumes by John Phillips and two by Jerry Vines; this most recent addition to the series represents an attempt by Phillips and Vines to collaborate in the production of an exposition of Daniel. Daniel 1-6 is the object of Vines' efforts ["Daniel and his Personal Friends"]; the discussion of chapters 7-12 ["Daniel and his People's Future"] is the work of Phillips.

Although neither writer explicitly identifies the rationale for such a division of the book, presumably it has been followed because 1–6 is perceived as “historical event” while 7–12 is understood as characterized by “prophetic vision.” Apparently, the former is more suited to the “preaching skills” of Vines, while the extensive study of prophecy by Phillips led to his addressing the latter [see Preface]. That they perceive their tasks as different is demonstrated by the fact that the first half of the book devotes almost 15 pages to a discussion of Daniel 2; at the same time Appendix 23 is a 15 page “prophetic exposition of Daniel 2,” prepared by Phillips.

It is this initial “division of labor,” however, which signals one of the major weaknesses of the work. There is no effort made to address the critical issue of the book’s structure and the influence that has in determining the theological argument of the book. While both authors indicate their knowledge that the text of 2:4–7:28 is Aramaic, their division of the book between chapters six and seven suggests that they see no particular need to understand chapter seven as integrally related to the preceding material. Furthermore, there is no attempt to explain the obvious chronological disjunction of various components of the book. The straightforward dating of certain events and visions makes it obvious that it was not Daniel’s intention to present them in a sequential manner at every point; thus, the reader is invited to probe what must have been a theological/thematic intent for his arrangement.

The hermeneutical method employed in the first half of the book unfortunately cannot be characterized either as exegetical or expositional. The apparent concern is, rather, to “sermonize,” illustrate and apply. The resulting material exemplifies the thin gruel produced by failure to come to grips with the theological dynamics of the narrative.

Particularly disappointing is the rather cavalier approach to portions of the theological narrative in chapters 1–6. The following comments concerning Daniel 6 illustrate the point:

“There was Daniel, down there in the lions’ den. As he hit bottom, a lion growled. The angel said, ‘Don’t you touch that man.’ Another one growled. ‘Shhh, let’s make this a quiet night. This man needs a good night’s rest. He’s in his nineties!’ Perhaps Daniel simply went over to a lion, said, ‘Hello, Leo,’ then lay down beside him and put his head on the now purring lion’s gorgeous mane, while the lion’s tail swished away the gnats and mosquitoes.” [89]

Although the second half of the book reflects a more concentrated effort to address the issues of the text, for which Phillips is to be commended, occasionally he engages in unwarranted speculation regarding matters that the text simply does not address. Two examples are offered. When discussing the interpretation of the Daniel 7 vision, Phillips finds it appropriate to speculate regarding the relationship of the United States, Canada and the Soviet Union to the fourth beast and the additional horn which arises after the ten. Again, in the ninth chapter Daniel makes specific reference to his contact with the Jeremiah prophecy concerning the length of the captivity. Phillips devotes more space to a discussion of Daniel’s relationship to Isaianic prophecies than to the one which the text specifies.

Inconsistency in the treatment of the text is evident at some points. In his discussion of 9:24 the writer asserts that, “The reference here is to Daniel’s

people, the Jews and to the 'holy city,' Jerusalem. This prophecy has nothing to do with the church. . . ." [145] Yet two pages later he comments: "But God intends to do more than cancel sin. He will *complete our salvation* [9:24]. . . . This has already been effected at the cross, and is being made good in the lives of believers today. The emphasis here, however, is on the nation of Israel." [147–48] At the outset of Phillips' treatment of Daniel 8, Daniel is presumed to have been in retirement [115], while at the end of his discussion of that chapter Daniel is presented as holding some governmental position, the exact nature of which is unknown [134].

Phillips' understanding of the prophetic visions should be characterized as "mainline conservative." That his discussion offers nothing that is either fresh or particularly insightful raises a question in this reviewer's mind about the need for such a volume. It neither models expository proclamation nor contributes to an advancement of an evangelical understanding of Daniel.

JOHN I. LAWLOR  
BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

*1 Kings: Nations Under God*, by Gene Rice. International Theological Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990. Pp. 198. \$10.95. Paper.

This 1990 addition to the International Theological Commentary is the product of a series of team-taught exegetical preaching classes at the author's institution, where he is professor of Old Testament Literature and Language [xiv]. The author has succeeded in creating a non-technical work that will provide beneficial, although general, reading for the targeted audience.

Rice develops his treatment of the 1 Kings narrative under five headings: [1] The reign of Solomon, 1:1–11:43; [2] The establishment of the northern kingdom, 12:1–16:28; [3] From the death of Solomon to the beginning of the reign of Ahab, 14:21–16:28; [4] The reign of Ahab and the prophetic opposition, 16:29–22:40; [5] After the death of Ahab, 22:41–2 Kgs 8:29. At the end of his treatment of the various sub-units under each heading, the author pauses for "Theological Reflection." Without discussing the theory of Hebrew narrative or historiographic technique, the writer's treatment subtly reflects an awareness of and sensitivity to the working of such matters, which are crucial to an appropriate reading of these kinds of biblical texts.

Obviously, in a work of this size and purpose, it is not possible to treat all the material evenly; Rice does not, however, fall prey to the temptation to concentrate on the more popular and well-known narratives of the book. Thus, while there are unavoidably some "thin spots" in the commentary, the author has generally achieved a commendable distribution of attention. The fact that Rice is not necessarily married to the chapters as always the most appropriate dividers of the material—a point that the biblical text itself often makes—creates a somewhat awkward, perhaps misleading, situation in part five of the commentary. The writer suggests that a major division begins with 22:41—thirteen verses before the conclusion of 1 Kings—and continues through 2 Kgs 8:29. Presumably the writing assignment was to prepare a commentary on

1 Kings; this results in only one page of discussion on part five. This should not be taken as a criticism of the writer, but rather as a suggestion that a commentary on 1–2 Kings, prepared by the same writer, would perhaps be more suitable.

Failure to address in a substantive way the theological issues related to the function of Hebrew prophetism in 1 Kings 13–14 and 17–19, is one defect of the work. In neither textual setting is the Kings narrator merely “relating interesting events” which occurred in the history of the northern kingdom. It seems rather, that the inclusion of the narratives dealing with the man of God from Judah, Ahijah’s visit from Jeroboam’s wife and the Elijah material is an invitation to the reader to contemplate the theological workings and implications of such instructional passages as Deut 13:1–5 and 18:9–22 [esp. 20–22]. While Rice does include a passing reference to Moses’ encounter with YHWH on Sinai [Exod 33:17–23] in his discussion of 1 Kings 19, he fails to pursue the theological ramifications of Elijah’s “like Moses” experience at the same geographical location and in somewhat similar circumstances.

The “Theological Reflections” in the book are cryptic. These discussions are intended to wrestle with the issue of the text’s message for the church; but it is here that Rice flounders. The pericope on the two harlots who claim the same child [3:16–28] is “a study of character and motherhood by comparison and contrast” [38]. The account of Solomon’s treaty with Hiram of Tyre [5:1–12] “is a reminder of the delicate relationship of Israel [and the Church] to the world. . . . Israel’s [and the Church’s] mission is not to condemn or to escape from the world but to transform it” [46]. The narrative of the Queen of Sheba’s visit to Jerusalem “mirrors one of the finest portraits of a woman in the OT.” Furthermore, “she serves as a type of those who are attracted to God’s covenant people. Her effort and enthusiasm shame those who have One greater than Solomon . . . but all too often do not regard getting to know him as a journey worth taking” [85]. Elijah’s contest with Ba’al [18:1–46] reminds the industrialized nations that “commercial success [the equivalent of rain] while resorting to dishonest practices ‘in order to survive’” constitutes a modern version of Ba’alism [156]. The theophany of 19:11–14 reminds us that “Whenever we locate God ‘in’ . . . our political or economic system, nation, class, race, or denomination, we also conceive God in Baal’s image” [162].

At this point one is forced to think back to the process which gave rise to Rice’s work. The reviewer respects any concentrated effort at wrestling with such difficult matters as the message, the original theological intent and the church’s use of books like 1 Kings; this is a task which challenges the most refined hermeneutical skills of the ablest of exegetes. The examples catalogued above, however, suggest a lack of any clear direction for theological reflection. At times the reader gets the impression that the writer was “grasping” for ideas about which he could moralize. This distracting fluidity may finally be traced to an extremely broad understanding of the purpose of 1 Kings: “First Kings is the story of Israel wrestling with the myriad problems of political existence from the last days of David . . . to the beginning of the reign of Ahaziah . . .” [1].

Perhaps a more explicit understanding of the narrator’s theological purpose would provide the basis for a more precise discernment of an appropriate use of 1 Kings by the church. Ultimately, the problem may be one of trying to

reduce the theological issues of a book like 1 Kings [cf. both its content and size] to such a limited amount of space, while at the same time addressing the implications of those theological matters for the church.

JOHN I. LAWLOR  
BAPTIST BIBLE SEMINARY

*A New Heart: A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, by Bruce Vawter and Leslie J. Hoppe. In *International Theological Commentary* series, edited by Fredrick Carlson Holmgren and George A. F. Knight. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991. Pp. 218. \$15.95. Paper.

A recent addition to Eerdmans' *International Theological Commentary* series, this commentary was begun by Bruce Vawter (formerly chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University) and completed after his death by Leslie Hoppe (associate professor of Old Testament and Chairperson of the Biblical Literature and Languages Department at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago). Vawter had finished the first draft of only the introduction and chapters 1–24 of the commentary at the time of his death. Nevertheless, the resultant work largely shows a good compatibility of writing styles and emphases so that the book lacks the disjointedness that sometimes accompanies such cases of co-authorship.

This commentary assumes that Ezekiel was a real Judean prophet who was taken into exile together with his king Jehoiachin in 597 B.C. (p. 2). Therefore, a genuine Ezekiel stands behind the work that bears his name. However, "The book itself is a product of the faith community that treasured the memory and message of the prophet" (p. 3).

While the prophet thus must have preached many of the oracles contained in the book, the present text of Ezekiel is the result of a complicated compilational and editorial process that everywhere betrays signs of editorial activity. Thus, the date of Ezekiel's inaugural vision (593 B.C.) has been supplied by a "glossator" (p. 24). For Vawter and Hoppe the whole unusual dating sequence supplied in Ezekiel is doubtless due to compilers who shaped the corpus of Ezekiel into its present shape in accordance with the dating scheme.

Commenting on chapters 3–24, the writers repeatedly point out instances of the work of the redactors. The section in 3:22–27 reflects an editorial insertion drawn from its original setting in 24:25. The pericope in 4:4–8 is "a pastiche made up of recollections of Ezekiel's prophecy rather than an actual record of a prophetic act observed" (pp. 41–42). The instructions concerning a few strands of Ezekiel's shorn hair may be "the afterthought of a redactor" (p. 46). The vision of the glory of the Lord in chapter one and in 10:9–17, 20:22 shows bi-directional redactional assimilation (p. 72). The placement of 11:1–13, "an alternate account of what the prophet recalled in 8:16–18," (p. 73) is due to a redactionist. Although 11:14–21 contains authentic words of Ezekiel, the passage as such "is a redactional composition, in part anticipating the prophet's later message, which a similar prophecy in Jeremiah has influenced (Jer 32:36–40)" (p. 75). In chapter fourteen, verses 1–5 serve as a

"redactional introduction" to the following verses (p. 85). The unit in 14:12–20 has been drawn from the prophet's collected words and fitted here due to "superficial verbal connections with the surrounding context" (p. 86). Both 16:59–63 and 17:22–24 are redactional supplements (pp. 97, 98). In the case of 20:32–44, "Here Ezekiel's later disciples tempered Yahweh's repudiation of Israel as set forth in the previous verses with thoughts drawn from the latter period of the prophet's career" (p. 103). The promise of salvation in 20:4–42 is a redactor's work, 20:45–21:7 contains a series of oracles gathered together by a redactor, 21:18–23 recalls a symbolic act performed before 589 B.C. but placed in its present context by a redactor (p. 106), and 21:24–27; 21:28–32; 22:17–22; 24:15–27 may all have been added to their present context by a redactor (so also 33:30–33; 38:5; 38:14–23; 39:6–16). Rounding out this section of Ezekiel, the authors hold that chapter twenty-three is filled with "considerable repetition," probably the work of later redactors who "have felt free to amplify and enlarge upon his original words" (p. 114). The prophecy of Jerusalem's siege (24:1–14) can likewise be attributed to redactors who "benefited from the realization of later history of prophesied events that were not very determined in their original utterance" (p. 114).

As for the rest of the book, the addition of Edom to the oracle is the work of an "overzealous editor" (p. 122) and 35:1–36:15 contains individual sayings brought together by the editorial judgment of "later traditionalists" (pp. 159–61), as do 37:12b–13 (p. 168) and 38:10–13. The latter perhaps may even not be Ezekiel's own work but a redactional expansion suited for the traditionalist's own "theological ends" (p. 177). The unit 39:6–16 is an expansive intrusion into the original oracle against Gog between 39:1–9 and its conclusion found in 39:17–20. Chapters 40–48 contain material that is replete "with imagery that is primarily mythic" (p. 185), "the result of literary additions to what was an original core of material that came from the prophet himself" (p. 186). Granted such wholesale editorial activity, the present text of Ezekiel is "a document that has undergone very extensive redaction," largely at the hands of "later enthusiasts" who have "subjected the book of Ezekiel to more amplifications, more than any other of the prophetic works. They have so augmented and annotated the prophet's words that it is often impossible to separate what is 'authentic' from what is 'accretional' in the book" (p. 10).

It is obvious that the above considerations are probably sufficient to make evangelical readers wary of the authors' treatment of Ezekiel. Several other ideas will contribute to that uneasiness. Thus, in addition to holding to the existence of a Second Isaiah (p. 15), the authors hold to a Third Isaiah (p. 88), and a late date for Jonah (p. 32). They also declare that the description of the Solomonic Temple in 1 Kings 6:2–7:51 is "ultimately the work of persons who had never seen it" (p. 64), find demythologized Babylonian material in the "lament" against Egypt (32:1–16; p. 143), and maintain that the Daniel mentioned in Ezek 14:14, 20 is synonymous with the Danel of earlier Canaanite legend (p. 87). Canaanite mythic motifs and imagery are said to be woven not only into the traditional case of the lament against Tyre (28:11–19; p. 132), but also into the Gog and Magog oracles (p. 172) and the concluding visions concerning the Kingdom of God (see, e.g., 47:1–12; p. 207), which the authors hold to be future but non-eschatological in orientation (pp. 174–75).

Ezekiel himself comes in for criticism here and there. For example, the prophet's trembling and shuddering as he eats and drinks (12:18) is said to indicate "some natural infirmity" (p. 80). Ezekiel's choice of metaphors describing the exile in 36:17 is termed "unfortunate" and that in 36:27 "too strong" (p. 162). Ezekiel's prophecy with regard to Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt is termed an attempt "to restore the prophet's credibility after the prophecies that he uttered against Tyre (see Ezek 26:1–28:19) did not come true" (p. 138). Other supposed examples of failed biblical prophecy are also cited (p. 139). All of these can certainly be explained otherwise. These, together with the authors' characterizing of Ezekiel as a prophet who at times exercises a good deal of imagination, may well cast light on their understanding of biblical inspiration.

One can always disagree with a few technical details. Thus, the Akkadian behind the River Chebar (1:3) is *nār(u) kabari* rather than *nar kabaru*. The *raqia'* of 1:22 is better translated "expansive" (see NIV) and certainly does not indicate that the Hebrews joined other peoples in antiquity who "thought of the sky as an inverted bowl of burnished and beaten metal. It served to hold in check the waters above the earth and served as a surface for the sun and moon and stars" (p. 29). The proposed evidence concerning Yahweh's personal consort named Asherah (pp. 52–53) is not fully established. Moreover, even if confirmed, as the authors themselves point out, such worship was "aberrant." Likewise, one may hesitate to follow the authors' readiness to emend the MT in places (e.g., at 6:14; note that the authors' charge of inaccuracy in the MT of 27:15, 16 is itself in error—p. 129). It needs to be pointed out as well that the "mark" of 9:4 (Heb ת) was written not only in the old Hebrew script as an "X" (p. 70), but as t.

This reviewer likewise finds some of the authors' interpretative conclusions to be less than satisfying. Thus, they insist that the book of Ezekiel lacks any "faithful remnant" theme (pp. 54, 71). They also maintain that while God's forgiveness of Israel was important, without his sovereign initiative in remembering the people so that future disobedience would be impossible, "a genuine conversion on Israel's part is impossible" (p. 164). Thus, it will be neither a "faithful remnant" nor a repentant Israel that will ultimately be the basis of God's blessing; rather, Israel's final redemption will be solely the product of God's mercy. "Even if their sin makes them unworthy of God's grace, God will give that grace nonetheless" (p. 212). It is of interest to note (perhaps reflecting some difference in authorial position), however, that elsewhere it is said that as a sort of first step toward being part of that future group brought into existence through God's power, those Israelites who heed Ezekiel's warning "and act on his exhortations will be ready to live in the future that God's power is bringing into existence. Those who fail to heed the prophet must bear the burden of their intransigence" (p. 15).

While it is true that the divine initiative is an important key to Ezekiel's theology, it seems difficult to emphasize this fact to the exclusion of the theme of a repentant and faithful remnant. This is especially the case since it is so common in other Old Testament prophecies. Moreover, Ezekiel clearly seems to imply the application of this theme in at least ten passages (6:8–10; 9:8; 11:13; 14–21; 12:16; 14–22–23; 16:60–63; 17:22–24; 20:32–44; 22:17–22; 24:13–14).

Equally dissatisfying is the contention that "Ezekiel lacks messianic vision for the Davidic house" (p. 108). It would appear illogical that in quoting Gen 49:10 (Ezek 21:27) Ezekiel would take a traditional messianic text and apply it to Nebuchadnezzar, as the authors suggest. Moreover, the position taken here seems at variance with the stance assumed in 34:23-24: "Here Ezekiel envisions a David of the future who will be the shepherd of God's flock" (p. 156). To avoid a potential contradiction, the authors attempt to separate a future David figure from the Davidic dynasty itself. Surely this is difficult to do, however, since the two have been inextricably bound together previously in mainstream Hebrew orthodox prophecy (2 Sam 7:11b-29; 23:1-7; Isa 7:1-9:7; cf. Ps 89:1-37). Such also seems clearly Ezekiel's intent subsequently in 37:15-28, where God's new covenant of peace is associated with the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants in one grand collection of prophetic themes (and where as well the remnant theme is clearly expressed).

The above comments notwithstanding, Vawter and Hoppe are obviously thoroughly at home with the major themes and problems of Ezekiel's prophecy. To their credit, they often challenge their readers to be genuinely receptive to the gracious acts of a sovereign, holy, and merciful God, and by faith "experience God's presence touching their lives" (p. 213). Nevertheless, their overall concessions to a non-evangelical position at so many key points will probably keep this commentary from enjoying a ready reception in the evangelical community.

RICHARD PATTERSON  
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

*The Lord is Savior: Faith in National Crisis*, by S. H. Widyapranawa. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990. Pp. 266. \$14.95. Paper.

In this commentary on Isaiah 1-39, Widyapranawa examines Isaiah's depiction of the dynamics of faith in a turbulent world and applies it to the preaching of God's justice and truth in the current age. As part of the *International Theological Commentary* (ITC) series, the commentary "seeks to share theological interpretation which could serve as study material for pastors, preachers, theological students, and the Christian community in general" (p. xii). A second purpose of both the series and this commentary is to provide interpretation that transcends "the parochialism of Western civilization" (p. x).

The commentary's form and layout contribute to its readability. The author incorporates his outline for this section of Isaiah in his comments by dividing the commentary into six major sections, chapter divisions, and the use of headings and subheadings. Widyapranawa helps the reader to keep in touch with Isaiah's flow of argument by providing an overview at the beginning of each major section, chapter and subsection. An abundance of cross-references to other biblical passages, both in Isaiah (chaps. 1-66) as well as the rest of the OT, connect Isaiah's theology with the entire OT corpus.

Although Widyapranawa's primary intention is to examine Isaiah's broad theological message, he does provide some details concerning certain textual problems (pp. 102, 133, 160-61) and draws attention to several form critical



(refrain—pp. 55–58, woe oracles—pp. 22ff., 167ff.) and rhetorical features (onomatopoeia—p. 63, word plays—pp. 13, 22, alliteration—p. 145, and hyperbole—p. 142). He also makes several comparisons with ANE mythology and culture (pp. 51, 67, 159, 185–86).

Although Isaiah's prophecy is primarily anchored in the second half of the eighth century B.C., Widyapranawa identifies several later additions or "editorial intrusions" (p. 60) by writers from various time periods throughout chapters 1–39 (pp. 11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 55, 60, 61, 70, 77, 139ff., 167, 190, 215, 229).

The author's interpretive decisions with regard to the following benchmark passages and issues provide a glimpse of the volume's contents. The birth of "Immanuel" to the *ʿalmah* (7:14) is primarily historical (p. 42). Widyapranawa avoids any attempt to identify the woman. The author suggests that both of the Messianic passages (9:1–7; 11:1–10) were given at the time of Israel's annual "re-enthronement" festival in Jerusalem (pp. 50–52, 66–67). In this scenario, they were probably addressed to Hezekiah as a prophetic symbol of a messianic king yet to come (cf. Pss 2, 21, 72, 110, 132). As with Psalm studies, the appropriateness of this suggestion of an annual enthronement festival is questionable. He also favors the two campaign view in his comments on chapters 36–37 (pp. 240–43). Finally, since the "Church is the Israel of the new covenant people of God in Christ" (p. 114), Isaiah's proclamation to Israel of the need to practice justice and compassion is incumbent upon the Church (p. 129). Although the author recognizes that God's Spirit is necessary for the ultimate establishment of a perfectly just society (p. 201), he asserts that the church must call the world to repentance with regard to a host of social issues (pp. 70, 86).

While Widyapranawa does a commendable job of tracing Isaiah's theological message, the adjustment of a few features would add to this volume's value. The two paragraphs of introduction (p. xiv) should be expanded for the reader not acquainted with the significant Isaianic issues. Secondly, in spite of the stated intention of this series to provide an internationally flavored interpretation, this reviewer only found eight instances of clear non-Western applications of Isaiah's theology (pp. 49, 52, 56, 81, 89, 114, 141–42, 143). To be more useful to non-Western readers and to help Westerners be less parochial, more work in this area would be helpful. Thirdly, while references to other volumes from this series provide the relevant page numbers, all citations to the two sister volumes of the present commentary (*Servant Theology* [Isaiah 40–55], *The New Israel* [Isaiah 56–66]) lack this information (pp. 112, 162, 174, 249). This is especially frustrating when the reader is directed to examine George Knight's treatment of "righteousness" in these two sister volumes (p. 24). Finally, in light of Isaiah's significant contribution to OT theology and in comparison to other ITC works, the bibliography of the present work is scanty. It cites only 15 other volumes, two of which are its sister volumes from the series. No journal articles and only one essay are listed.

Since this volume does not attempt to be an exegetical commentary but seeks to delineate Isaiah's theology, it can be helpful to the basic Bible student as well as a pastor or teacher.

Even though this reviewer does not agree with the author on several issues (in particular, his view of the composition of chapters 1–39), the commentary

is synthetic enough to keep its reader familiar with Isaiah's argument, a commendable feature for any commentary.

MICHAEL A. GRISANTI  
CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, by F. F. Bruce. Third Revised and Enlarged Edition. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990. Pp. 569. \$39.95. Cloth.

The first edition (1951) of this significant work came into this reviewer's hands when he was a young New Testament professor forty years ago. The careful and thorough scholarship, the clarity of writing, and the soundness of judgment evidenced by the author were impressive from the start, and have prompted an eager reading of the continuing stream of books that have flowed from Dr. Bruce's pen. The world of evangelical scholarship has lost a champion at the death of F. F. Bruce in September, 1990, a few months after he wrote the preface to this third edition.

Although F. F. Bruce may be more widely known for his commentary on Acts in the *New International Commentary* series, this volume on the Greek text preceded it, and has now been revised and enlarged. This reviewer was amazed to see how extensive the revisions and enlargements were.

The current volume is 78 pages longer than the second edition (1952). The Contents table is expanded from 2 pages to 9 pages. The Introduction is enlarged from 64 pages to 96 pages. The Westcott-Hort Greek text used in the first edition has now been modified to follow closely the Nestle-Aland text (p. 77). The expanded sections are far too numerous to mention because the contents of the previous edition has clearly been completely scrutinized and updated by the author. Bruce indicates in his Preface that he has written on all of Paul's epistles except the Pastorals since his first edition, and this has greatly increased his perspective on Acts and enriched his commentary.

Prominent among the expansions to be found in the new edition are his treatments of various historical figures and places, such as Damascus, Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, Felix, and the death of Stephen. The introduction to the voyage to Rome has been greatly enlarged.

Although conclusions of Dr. Bruce reflect the same perspective as the earlier editions, his scholarship did not remain static, and he does not refrain from changing his mind upon occasion. He now thinks that the gathering of the Twelve at Pentecost was probably in the upper room, not the temple (p. 114). He concludes that the region of Shechem is most likely the place where Philip preached (p. 216), whereas in the previous edition he preferred Gitta. In the new edition, the quotation from the Muratorian Fragment regarding the Lukan authorship of Acts has been given in English translation, rather than being left in Latin as before (p. 1). This is helpful for us whose Latin is more rusty than we care to admit.

Bruce is always thought-provoking. Whether or not one agrees with every interpretation, he cannot read this volume without being enriched by the

wealth of information, abundance of research, and felicity of expression. Even if you already have editions one or two, get this one!

HOMER A. KENT

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, by Simon J. Kistemaker. In New Testament Commentary series. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. Pp. 1010, \$29.95, Cloth.

The latest volume, of more than 1000 pages, in the New Testament Commentary series is a worthy addition to this excellent set which began many years ago with the writings of William Hendriksen. This volume on Acts is by Simon J. Kistemaker, professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Mississippi and a long-time officer of the Evangelical Theological Society. It is his fourth contribution to this popular series.

This reviewer found Kistemaker's work to be carefully done, well-researched, and attractively presented. The exposition is verse by verse, with the author's own translation at the head of each section. Following the exposition are sections entitled "Greek Words, Phrases, and Constructions," "Doctrinal Considerations," and "Practical Considerations," along with a summary at the end of each chapter.

The eschatological stance of this work is amillennial, but this does not seriously detract from the value of the commentary for those whose eschatology may differ. In discussing the disciples' question to Jesus about restoring the kingdom to Israel (1:6, p. 52), the author recognizes that the question has to do with the time of restoration, not its factuality, but he then proceeds to interpret it as a reference to the restoration of spiritual Israel with little argumentation. His tone, however, is not demanding nor combative.

Kistemaker deals with most of the problem passages which bother interpreters, and does so in a readable fashion which should be appreciated by most users of this commentary. One does not need to be a technical expert in the Greek language to find this volume a great interpretive help. Among the interpretations he espouses are the following: the Acts account of the Field of Blood is supplemental to the Matthew account but not contradictory (p. 62); the tongues of Pentecost differ from those at Corinth, and Spirit baptism and water baptism normally occur simultaneously (p. 78). There is an excellent summarizing statement on New Testament teaching about the reception of the Holy Spirit (p. 302). No position is taken as to whether Philip was supernaturally removed from the vicinity of Gaza (p. 321), but he concludes that Paul was a failure in his early years of ministry (p. 354).

In regard to the troublesome reading εἰς (eis) in 12:25, Kistemaker opts for Metzger's translation, but with some hesitation (p. 448). He puts the Council of Jerusalem prior to Paul's second journey, but equates it with Galatians 2 without explaining how it could be Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, and not his third as Acts indicates (pp. 533, 536). He experiences difficulty (as most interpreters do) explaining the friendliness of the Asiarchs to Paul (p. 701). The

Western reading of 24:7 is accepted, but the use of brackets is advocated to indicate the problem (pp. 837–38). An excellent map is provided to explain the Phoenix harbor problem (p. 923), and a helpful explanation is given for the name of the storm Euroquilo (pp. 925–26). Some interesting suggestions are given as to why the Roman Jews claimed ignorance of Paul's case (pp. 960–61). Kistemaker believes Paul was released after his two years of imprisonment (p. 967), and suggests the constant stream of soldiers assigned to guard Paul during imprisonment not only heard the gospel from him, but also became missionaries when they were subsequently posted to another part of the Roman empire. Thus was fulfilled Jesus' mandate that apostolic witness was to go to the ends of the earth (1:8, p. 968).

This is an excellent commentary on Acts which will provide a fruitful resource for anyone studying this pivotal book of the New Testament. It should become a standard work for many years.

HOMER A. KENT  
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, by Charles A. Wanamaker. The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990. Pp. 316. \$29.95. Cloth.

Charles Wanamaker, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, has made a valuable contribution to The New International Greek Testament Commentary series. In keeping with the design of the series, Wanamaker's contribution demonstrates rigorous and detailed exegesis of the Greek text, interaction with recent scholarship, and sensitivity to the theological themes in the epistles and the historical context. One unique feature is Wanamaker's use of sociological interpretation, which adds depth and insight to the understanding of the epistles.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the commentary is Wanamaker's judicious application of classical rhetorical criticism. Following Jewett (*Thessalonian Correspondence*, pp. 72–72) Wanamaker classifies 1 Thessalonians as a demonstrative/epideictic letter (pp. 46–48). This category conveys praise (or blame) of one's behavior. Even though praise dominates the epistle, the parenetic element is also present in a supporting role, suggesting Paul was persuading the Thessalonians to maintain a certain style of life. Analysis of rhetorical genre not only discloses Paul's intention but also indicates that he was satisfied with the Thessalonians' progress. Wanamaker classifies 2 Thessalonians as a piece of deliberative rhetoric since it seeks to persuade the readers to change their beliefs regarding the day of the Lord and to act decisively against idleness.

Wanamaker uses rhetorical criticism not only to provide genre categorization but also to analyze Paul's structural relationships, purpose, argumentation, use of evidence, and control of emotion. Such analysis pervades the comments throughout the work. Wanamaker argues that neither thematic nor epistolary analysis is adequate by itself (pp. 46, 215).

The structure of both books is based on a combination of rhetorical and epistolary criticism, with the rhetorical structure of the body being placed within the epistolary prescript and closing. Wanamaker divides 1 Thessalonians into the Epistolary Prescript (1:1), Exordium (1:2–10), Narratio (2:1–3:10), Transitus (3:11–13), Probatio (4:1–5:22), and Peroratio and Epistolary Closing (5:23–28). He divides 2 Thessalonians into the Epistolary Prescript (1:1–2), Exordium (1:3–12), Partitio (2:1–2), Probatio (2:3–15), Peroratio (2:16–17), Exhortatio (3:1–15), and Epistolary Closing (3:16–18).

Another distinctive element of the commentary is Wanamaker's reversing the traditional order of the epistles. Although the priority of 2 Thessalonians is not novel with Wanamaker, it is perhaps the first application of the theory in a major commentary. By reversing their canonical order, Wanamaker contends that a number of introductory and exegetical problems can be resolved, especially the relationship between the two epistles. Wanamaker, following others who hold this view, suggests that Timothy delivered 2 Thessalonians during the visit mentioned in 1 Thess 3:1–5. Paul had thought that the Thessalonians were in danger of being shaken in their faith from outside influences. To correct the situation, Paul sends Timothy and our 2 Thessalonians. When Timothy returned with news that the circumstances were not as precarious as Paul supposed, Paul wrote our 1 Thessalonians praising them on their steadfastness and moral progress. Those who hold the traditional order are confronted with the problem of the abrupt deterioration of circumstances between the two epistles. This problem, along with several others, is solved by positing the priority of 2 Thessalonians. Wanamaker comments on the books in their traditional sequence to make the work useful for those who are hesitant about accepting his theory.

In the lengthy introduction Wanamaker methodically reviews the arguments against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians and the literary integrity of both epistles. After pointing out weaknesses in the argumentation and evaluating counterarguments, he concludes by favoring the traditional position on both issues. This same precision is observed in his treatment of exegetical problems.

The commentary contains more translation of Greek words and phrases than previous volumes, reflecting a conscious effort of the editors to fulfill one intent of the series, to be accessible to those with only limited knowledge of Greek. Most technical and rhetorical terms are defined within the commentary. The end matter contains an author index, a subject index, and an index of ancient works. The work is immensely readable, holds one's interest, and is a pleasure to use.

In summary, the commentary is scholarly, innovative, provocative, clearly written, marked with careful exegesis, sound argumentation, and conservative conclusions. Wanamaker explores various interpretative views with precision without becoming pedantically boring. It is a must for theological libraries and highly recommended for professors, pastors and students of the Greek New Testament.

RICHARD A. YOUNG  
CHATTANOOGA, TN

*Two Hundred Years of Theology: Report of a Personal Journey*, by Hendrikus Berkhof. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989. Pp. 316. \$24.95.

Hendrikus Berkhof (retired professor of theology, University of Leiden) has written this book as much for himself as for others who would read and follow what he presents. For this reason it is a mistake to come to this book without recognizing the role played by the subtitle. But this point hardly tells the story of this book. *Two Hundred Years of Theology* is not as it would appear to most potential readers at first glance, a textbook *about* or descriptive of the various significant persons, movements and philosophies which have played such significant roles in that which is often classified as "Modern Theology." This does not mean that this does not occur in these pages or that little *about* the various influential positions is not given. Quite the opposite is the case as a rule. But the reader must grasp these points in the dynamic context of the particular setting and flow and influences which each have their part to play in theological formulation. This book is no mere analysis from some lofty pinnacle above the strivings of the theological task but rather Dr. Berkhof's *own* wrestling with various theologians and theological and philosophical trends (as directly or indirectly impressing theological thinking, e.g., Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Heidegger). The purpose is to understand *how* these worked out and/or affected the relationship of the gospel message and their particular (Western) culture. This point is repeatedly emphasized throughout the text in the attempt to understand theology in light of the fact that this relationship is inevitable as Paul's own ministry may exemplify ("to the Jews I became . . . to the Greeks I became . . . in order to win . . ."). It is with this concern in mind that Berkhof makes repeated reference to the *Lebensgefühl* of each theologian as he did his work, i.e., theology done (consciously or unconsciously) as it reflects a particular era's positive or negative (etc.) "sense of life."

Berkhof does interact with almost every *major* theological and philosophico-theological figure and movement in the last two hundred years ("Liberation Theology" discussed only in appropriate contexts). Unlike most such works which focus on Continental European or specifically German developments, this book gives helpful and insightful chapters on directions in the United States, Great Britain and in Berkhof's homeland, the Netherlands. Chapter by chapter, he walks *through* and *with* the life, times and individual developments in thought of each theologian as he actively engages himself in the theological task as a teacher of the gospel message in this or that setting and under varied cultural or historical influences. Some let culture dominate the message. Others give less than adequate attention to the culture in which the gospel message was given (in this book it is usually the former—Barth and Kierkegaard being among the exceptions). The result is a larger continuity which is intended by Berkhof to override the individual chapters which discuss these theologians or movements as they attempt to bring or relate the gospel to culture. Berkhof makes clear that some have done a much more effective job in this than others. But Berkhof is always irenic, avoiding hasty, caricatured judgmentalism in his negatively constructive assessments. This spirit of the work is to be appreciated. Theology, as he says, is a human endeavor not done in heaven by already glorified human beings. In the context of real human existence Berkhof says, "The Christian church must, in the name of

its Lord, be where the wayward are. And theology, as scholarly reflection on the movement of God toward his lost world, must mirror this movement in its theme" (p. 302).

This book brought forth initial hopefulness (as a possible text for "Modern and Contemporary Theology"), then disappointment (for it does not simply analyze positions point by point), and then finally a positive change of mind. This is a telling work about the nature of the theological task in the world. While Berkhof has not given much reference to Protestant Orthodoxy in the book (he apologizes for this decision and gives some of the reasons for it in the "Preface"), he does examine nineteenth century Reformed Orthodoxy in the Netherlands (Kuyper, Bavinck, Berkouwer) in light of the great cultural as well as theological impact of that movement. Some of his comments which do "slip" through are less than fully complimentary, but maybe these ought to be seen as a prod toward a greater engagement in the larger theological task (within the European context Hendrikus Berkhof is usually regarded as basically "orthodox"). The closing discussion of the *doing* of theology, the relating of the gospel to a God-estranged (but loved) world and the "future" of theology is a fine capstone to this "personal inquiry" which will become itself, it is hoped, an effective "road" toward theological insight for many more. This book is recommended.

JOHN D. MORRISON  
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

*The Case for Christian Humanism*, by William R. Franklin and Joseph M. Shaw. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. 270. \$18.95. Paper.

The second of two books, following *Readings in Christian Humanism* and completing "a four-college project called 'Humanism in an Age of Limits: A Christian Perspective,'" *The Case for Christian Humanism* is a provocative combination of history and polemic. In an attempt to redress the imbalance the authors see in contemporary American Christianity, the book cites historical evidence and philosophical rationale for the thesis that "the classical faith confessed by Christians in every generation implies a strong and caring interest in human beings as such" (p. ix).

To be certain, the term *humanism* is a vexed one for many conservative Christians. Fraught as the term is today with overtones of "secular humanism," the authors are careful to establish early on that their view of Christianity is orthodox (p. xvii) and that they reject secular versions of humanism as substandard for the Christian (chap. 1). The material in this opening chapter assures the conservative reader that the authors' epistemology and axiology are consistent with historical Christianity.

In a brief overview (chaps. 2 and 3), Franklin and Shaw trace the history of humanism from an early form, in which radical secularism was not present, to its split into "secular" and "Christian" forms. While this section is admittedly introductory, the cursory nods toward Darwin, Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx are inadequate to establish the radical secularism which Christians in a post-modern culture must counter. Happily, however, the authors extend their brief discussions of the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Council of Trent, and modern-day ecumenism in later chapters.

Following their introduction, the authors begin with the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, as the source for a high view of humanity as created in God's image and the object of God's soteriological love in the incarnate Son of God. "At the heart of Christian humanism," Franklin and Shaw write, "stands the Incarnation of the divine Word in the living, historical actuality of Jesus." And again, "There is a point of contact between human nature and the Logos which became flesh in the human nature of Jesus" (p. 62). Perhaps the most thought-provoking chapter in this part of the book is that on "Paul, Witness to the New Humanity," because of the perception held by many that Paul was so concerned with preaching the gospel that he ignored temporal human needs; the authors argue that Paul was thoroughly "humanistic."

In parts three and four, Franklin and Shaw argue three propositions, largely through historical analysis. First, they emphasize the centrality of the eucharist to Christian experience and to proper Christian humanism—in its Roman Catholic, as well as its Protestant forms. Second, they argue for the necessity for especially American Christians to go beyond their individualism toward Christian community, in which the human worth of all people—no matter their race, culture, financial and social positions—is actively affirmed. Third, they suggest that the modern ecumenical movement "has the potential for a significant advancement of Christian humanism in our time" (p. 42). Throughout their arguments, the authors marshal evidence from Christian traditions as disparate as Luther and Calvin, the Council of Trent, the Scottish Iona Community, Vatican II, and the ARC (Action, Reflection, Celebration) Ecumenical Retreat Community in Minnesota. Finally, attention is paid to a number of contemporary social concerns, such as the environment, from the perspective of the Christian humanism promoted in the book. There can be no doubt that Franklin and Shaw see Christian humanism as a return to a proper Christian orthodoxy.

While it is doubtful that any reader will agree with all that Franklin and Shaw write, *The Case for Christian Humanism* is a compelling and worthy book. The thesis that contemporary American Christianity needs to reconsider the social and human implications of the gospel is timely. For this reader, the most irritating aspect of the book was its attempt to cover too much historical data, much of it extremely significant, without the detailed analysis that it warranted. Nonetheless, the book will prod most people's thinking about the condition and nature of American Christianity at the end of the twentieth century.

MICHAEL E. TRAVERS  
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST COLLEGE

*Creation and the History of Science*, by Christopher B. Kaiser. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991. Pp. 316. \$17.95. Paper.

Dr. Christopher Kaiser teaches historical and systematic theology at Western Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church, Holland, MI. He shows familiarity with a wide spectrum of material and names throughout the history of science. This book is the third in a series called *The History of Christian Theology*, an analysis of "the Christian tradition from an historical perspective." The first two volumes are *The Science of Theology* and *The Study and Use of the Bible*, both with multiple authors.



The theme of this book is the waxing and waning of *creationist tradition* in science. This does not refer to creationism in its modern, narrow sense. Instead, Kaiser lists four distinct parts of the rich tradition:

Comprehensibility—	The world is accessible to human understanding.
Unity—	We live in a <i>universe</i> , with the same physical laws acting throughout.
Autonomy—	God has established these natural laws by which the universe acts, thereby keeping it from chaos.
Healing and Restoration—	Medicine, technology, and creation stewardship are ethical outworkings of science.

These themes are traced through the centuries in both East and West cultures. Certain figures are emphasized, as for example Basil, Bishop of Caesarea in A.D. 370. Basil first formulated the four creationist traditions in the *Hexameron*, a popular series of lectures on the first six days of creation. Some of Basil's wise quotes could have been made yesterday:

The astronomers have measured the distances to the stars, yet they have not realized that God is their Creator and Judge (p. 5).

Living out his faith, Basil founded history's first hospital or infirmary for the public in A.D. 372.

During the twelfth century, the rise of natural philosophy and the restrictions of Aristotelian science led to a breakdown in the creationist science tradition. There developed a polarization between attempts to understand the workings of nature, and the placing of these same workings in a supernatural, "hands off" category. The organized Church during 1200–1400 stifled inquiry and consequently stagnated.

Kaiser continues with the renaissance rise of modern science. His many quotes are especially fascinating to anyone familiar with physical science. For example, scientist Tartaglia was concerned about his books on ballistics, written during 1537–1546. He knew they had military value, and concluded that their publication would be "cruel and deserving of no small punishment by God" (p. 113). Geologist Agricola (1494–1555) concerned himself with the propriety of disturbing the earth in order to extract metals (p. 115). Some of this ethical reflection, if revived, could do much to raise the credibility of current science.

As Kaiser approaches the present era, names appear frequently: Boyle, Kepler, Newton, Maxwell, Bohr, Einstein, and a hundred others. For each, Kaiser evaluates their fidelity to the creationist tradition. Isaac Newton wrote his *Principia Mathematica* in 1687 "with an eye upon such principles as might work with considering men, for the belief of a Deity" (p. 180). Kepler included prayers in his professional writings.

Meanwhile, today "the most that can be said is that a few scientists have allowed the possibility of God's existence in their more popular writings" (p. 301). Kaiser believes that the creationist tradition continues nevertheless; the values "live on in the minds of physical scientists independently of, or even in the absence of, personal religious faith" (p. 307). However, the future is uncertain. The time may come when technical progress halts and faith is

again needed for advancement as in past centuries (p. 308). Looking at current trends in science, many would conclude that this crisis is fast approaching.

DON B. DEYOUNG  
GRACE COLLEGE

*Life's Ultimate Questions: A Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*, by John P. Newport. Word Publishing, 1989. Pp. 644. \$16.95.

Dr John Newport, Provost and professor of philosophy of religion at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has long sought to deal with life's ultimate questions. The "Preface" to this lengthy work gives much insight not only into John Newport's thirst for knowledge and life's ultimate questions but into his desire to communicate biblical answers to such questions to others (as he does regularly around the country and beyond). Because of this he has written numerous previous works that have touched variously on issues that he has brought together in this his *magnum opus*.

This is not a run-of-the-mill book on philosophy of religion. The purpose is much more openly stated and clearly perceived on almost every page (especially near the beginning and end of each major chapter). Further, Newport deals with questions not often dealt with so directly, if at all, in other books considered to be philosophies of religion. This book is meant to have, and indeed, ought to have a wide readership. It has been written in a semi-popular way for the purpose of accessibility and effective ministry. After a very significant chapter on "the Biblical World view" and the application of such to life's ultimate questions, Newport gives ample discussion, debate and analysis to the meaning of history, religious and biblical language (God-talk), science and the biblical world view. The following topics are discussed; science and the issues of prayer and miracles; evil and suffering along with the issue of demonic powers; death and the life beyond; world religions; the relationship of faith and reason in the knowledge of God; human morality; and finally the arts, culture and worship. This overview should be indicative of this book's uniqueness and its intention to minister and teach.

In coming to each critical issue/question Newport begins by carefully laying the foundations and expanding the reader's vision for the angles, facets and aspects that this problem surfaces. While having to be succinct at this juncture, Newport is usually fair, seeking to avoid the heavy handed measures that would defeat the very purpose of the book itself. After the exposition and analysis of the various perspectives, Newport begins gathering together some of the reflections that had arisen in the process (for example, that which is good and right in a particular viewpoint). He develops the biblical perspective while showing how it answers the questions more effectively than all other options. This method is hardly new but Newport's own style and concerns along with his ability to communicate God's truth make this very effective in most cases.

This book is usually quite satisfactory, even excellent at points (given its expressed purpose and range). Any person relatively educated could read this book easily and with much stimulation and profit. One will not agree with Newport at all times but his perspectives at each point and under each question are

truly Christian, stimulative, and viable. As mentioned above, Newport has included the discussion of questions not usually included in other, often more scholarly, texts on philosophy of religion. The discussions on the development of the earth and mankind, Christianity and the World Religions, evil and demonic activity and the Christian view of the various arts were the most stimulating and controversial. Newport is clearly antidispensational (he has not read anything more recent than Ryrie and clearly knows little of development in this school of thought nor does he have any real aspect for creation science as a science). He seems to hold (its hard to tell) to a form of theistic evolution, but *micro*-evolution and not *macro*-evolution is considered as the appropriate or operative description. At times, Newport's chapters seem to be merely a stringing together of the thoughts of other authors, but his discussion is helpful.

All in all, with these points in mind, *Life's Ultimate Questions* by John Newport would serve as a basic undergraduate text (with supplements) in philosophy of religion.

JOHN D. MORRISON  
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

*The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, by John Piper. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990. Pp. 119. n.p. Paper.

This is a book of extraordinary value, one which every pastor and every aspirant to the gospel ministry should read as soon as possible. As the title indicates, John Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, holds that preaching should be first and foremost about God. In today's ecclesiastical atmosphere churchgoers have come to expect that the main purpose of preaching is to provide solutions for their problems. The author of this highly readable and powerful book contends, on the contrary, that preaching should extol God. "Our people need to hear God-entranced preaching. They need someone . . . to life up his voice and magnify the supremacy of God. They need to behold the whole panorama of his excellencies" (p. 11). This may not be what people *want*, but it is what they *need*, for their salvation and sanctification depend upon it. "Holiness is nothing other than a God-centered life—the living out of a God-entranced worldview" (p. 11).

In a time when much preaching is autobiographical in character and pulpites often seek to be clever and amusing with anecdotes, Piper's thesis may seem radical, but it is actually a plea for a return to the apostolic methods through which God has times been pleased to send revival to his people.

As a young theology student John Piper began a thorough study of Jonathan Edwards as a theologian and preacher. That study has become a life-long undertaking that has convinced Piper that he must preach with the same "gravity and gladness" that Edwards displayed. "His preaching was totally serious. . . . You will look in vain for one joke in the 1200 sermons that remain" (p. 47). Edwards refrained from almost every pulpit device that modern preachers employ, yet God blessed his ministry abundantly, even to the point that historians often cite it as the beginning of the Great Awakening in America. Perhaps Piper is right in contending that many preachers want revival "and

then proceed to cultivate an atmosphere in which it could never come" (p. 56). In other words, until ministers become God-centered in their lives and in their preaching, there is no reason to expect revival. Why should God honor pulpit presentations that do not focus upon him?

Because *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* contradicts current philosophies of preaching, it will probably provoke some who read it. Pastors who are willing to engage in critical self-examination may, however, find their attitudes and therefore their ministries transformed by its influence. Perhaps they, like John Piper, will make "the grand object of preaching . . . the infinite and inexhaustible being of God, and the pervasive atmosphere of preaching the holiness of God" (p. 20). What could be better?

JAMES EDWARD MCGOLDRICK  
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

*God, Language, and Scripture: Reading the Bible in the Light of General Linguistics*, by Moisés Silva. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, vol. 4. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. Pp. 160.

Now more than ever, the church has no excuse for misreading the Bible. In a lively, informative, current, and wide-ranging introduction to his subject, Professor Silva broaches a number of linguistic principles foundational to responsible exegesis, and at a crucial time. The present maze of hermeneutical and textual questions raised by deconstructionist, marxist, and feminist criticism can be diversionary at best, subversive and stultifying at worst. Further, despite the many inroads to critical theory made by Post Structuralism (with its basic assumptions that the only world that exists is the "world" of language—there is no reality outside of texts—and that textual meaning is indeterminate), a number of American seminaries seem fairly receptive to the idea of requiring less rigorous study of biblical languages. This last concern elicits a useful appendix to *God, Language, and Scripture* (pp. 141–45), a brief but pointed defense of Hebrew and Greek in the seminary core curriculum. Preceding this afterword are seven chapters containing plentiful insights not only into issues that inform both language and hermeneutics but also the multi-faceted nature of language itself.

The book delivers noticeably more than it promises. According to the preface, "One of the purposes of this book is to provide guidance in the use of the biblical languages" (ix). That guidance covers a broad area of discussion, beginning with a brief introduction (pp. 11–18) and proceeding through a chapter on the origin and theology of language (chap. 2); the interdisciplinary nature of linguistics (chap. 3); Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek within the context of general linguistic history (chap. 4); and selected points of comment on phonology, lexicology, syntax, and discourse-level issues in biblical languages (chaps. 5–7). While some readers at first may perceive these categories to be esoteric, Professor Silva's lucidly written text is quite accessible to his intended audience (educated readers, some of whom may lack formal training in biblical languages [p. ix]). One strength of this book, therefore, is its clear, but not simplistic, explanations of potentially abstruse content.

Another accomplishment is less apparent but hardly incidental to the overall design of the book. In short, Professor Silva calls for a more holistic methodology in exegesis, broadening the older emphasis upon only grammar and history. This goal, never stated explicitly, deserves some careful analysis here, due to its pervasiveness in the book and its importance to the ongoing synthesis of literature, history, and theology into a well-developed hermeneutical model.

Numerous comments throughout the book build a momentum supporting the author's call for a more consistent and integrated hermeneutic. The opening chapter, for example, is delightful in its satiric treatment of overzealous exegeses who emphasize word studies *ad nauseam*; some readers, in fact, may find Silva's approach to be reminiscent of Jonathan Swift's ridicule of uncontrolled rationalism through his deliberately ludicrous word studies in *Gulliver's Travels*. In a later passage of *God, Language, and Scripture*, commenting upon language as a coherent system of human expression, the author advises: "we do not do justice to language if we treat it atomistically, analyzing its individual components without reference to their place in the linguistic system" (p. 45). This advice is repeated two pages later. In chapter 5, while remarking that etymology has its proper function in interpretation (e.g., in tracing the usage of, say, rare Hebrew words in OT poetic passages), Silva offers an important qualification: "Most words . . . are widely attested and their meaning can be clearly established from the numerous contexts in which they appear. This state of affairs is especially true of New Testament Greek, which ironically has been subjected to a great deal of (unneeded) etymologizing" (p. 88). On the very next page Silva puts the matter frankly: "etymology seldom has a role to play in the interpretation of texts" (p. 89).

In addition, throughout chapter 6—a sentence-level and discourse-level description of the biblical languages—readers will find additional comments supporting a more holistic methodology. Silva begins with the reminder that "the *meaning* of Scripture is to be found in its propositions, not in isolated words" (p. 99). From here the author proceeds to discuss verb tenses, contrasting English usage with that of Hebrew and Greek, and concludes with a note about the importance of context in exegesis. His comment may serve also to illustrate his clarity of style:

an interpreter is unwise to emphasize an idea that allegedly comes from the use of a tense (or some other grammatical distinction) unless the context as a whole clearly sets forth that idea. Whether the use of the tense contributes to that idea or whether it is the idea that contributes to the use of the tense is perhaps debatable, but no interpretation is worth considering unless it has strong contextual support. If it doesn't, then the use of the grammatical detail becomes irrelevant; if it does, then the grammar is at best a pointer to, not the basis of, the correct interpretation (p. 118).

The importance of this advice is difficult to overstate. In setting forth the mutually informing relationship between grammar and context, Silva assigns grammatical issues less imperial status within the process of interpretation but without analyzing the terribly complex issue about whether meaning ultimately resides in concepts or words. Analysis of this latter issue is peripheral to the main point: syntax, diction, and the like must not be used as autonomous determinants but as

relational indicators of textual meaning. Silva's concern about the authority of context is voiced often (but not excessively), as when he cautions that "meaning cannot be discovered apart from context" and that people "do not morally convey meaning by single propositions, but by propositions that form part of a larger whole (including the situation common to speaker and hearer)" (p. 124). This entire point alone—within the total context of the book—makes *God, Language and Scripture* essential reading.

What, then, are some implications of this exhortation to practice a more inclusive exegesis? Four are clear, one dealing with the biblical text itself and three with the process of interpretation. First, the divine inspiration of Scripture means that "its unity and coherence take on a completely new dimension" (p. 125); second, "we should read the Bible the way we read other literature" (p. 125); third, "the biblical books were meant to be read as wholes and that is the way we should read them" (p. 125); and fourth, "if the time and effort often invested in isolated word studies were redirected toward this kind of analysis, Bible students would gain a proportionately greater understanding of what the text says" (p. 127). All in all, Silva hopes to enable readers to use biblical languages wisely, including careful attention to the genre of a given book as well as *Sitz*, what some literary critics call the original rhetorical situation. His book achieves that aim, but his working out of it has a particularly focused objective, i.e., the facilitation of the use of language in general and within the hermeneutical process in particular, all of this leading to well-formulated, accurate exegesis. Whether *God, Language, and Scripture* achieves this goal remains to be seen, based upon readers' applications of the book.

If it has any shortcomings, they would have to include the favorable tone in which Ferdinand de Saussure's theories are discussed. True enough, Saussure questioned the practice of "diachronics" alone (i.e., studying language by examining its development over time) and recommended a "synchronic" approach, i.e., examining language also according to a single clearly-defined chronological period. The influence of diachronics in biblical studies is apparent through the emphasis placed upon word studies in exegesis, the very problem that Silva attacks. His discussion in chapter 3 is all the stronger due to the careful definitions and illustrations of the terms *diachronics* and *synchronics* (pp. 42–44).

One wonders, though, about the necessity of drawing Saussure into the discussion without at least an exhortation or two about some pitfalls within the larger scope of his research. While he did advocate a more synchronic than diachronic approach to the study of language, he also developed a theory that would allow later theorists to deny the very possibility of determinate meaning in a text. Saussure argued for the arbitrariness of a *sign* (basically the utterance by which an object is expressed) and a *signified* (the object itself). For example, there is no reason for pronouncing *ch* the way many English speakers do, especially given the different pronunciations based upon whether the signified is spoken in isolation (i.e., *c-h*) or as part of a word (as in *choir* or *chore*). In both words why is *ch* not pronounced the same way? Ultimately, claimed Saussure, there is no logical or necessary relation between the sign and the signified. The process of uniting the two, he proposed, is free association—with the two exceptions of onomatopoeia (in which the sound of the

signifier resembles the sound of the signified [e.g., buzz, moo]) and portmanteau word (i.e., the union of two words to form a new one [e.g., dishwasher, nightfall]). How then does language work? Supposedly by social convention, by the given assumptions about a particular language within a community of speakers at a specific time.

The problem here is twofold, one of origin and another of application, specifically to modern criticism. If language originated in arbitrariness and free association, what does this assumption imply about the nature of God, the Creator of language, the First Speaker? Did He call language into being by some irrational act, without design or motive? To be sure, His reasons and rationality far transcend our own, but something here deserves a few comments by Silva, especially given the importance of the doctrine of inerrancy. The second aspect of the problem is the linkage of three ideas central to critical theory: Saussurean arbitrariness, opposition as a principle in interpretation (noted by Silva on pp. 46–47), and the recent rise of deconstruction and reader response theory. Deconstruction operates, principally, upon Derrida's concept of *différance* (pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, creating a cute word play between *differ* and *defer*). Accordingly, texts lack determinate meaning because they are constantly “deferring” meaning away from themselves, to something else, to an Other. Therefore, historical and biographical studies have no place in criticism, intentionality is at best a hoax, and the idea of authorial personhood in texts belongs somewhere within a Eurocentric pride and privilege of days long past. Reader response, in turn (à la Stanley Fish), argues that since the author has no binding influence upon the meaning of a text, the meaning lies within the reader's language community.

This far-too-sketchy comment of mine on recent critical theories has two close connections to Silva's argument. First, his use of Saussure is fair as far as it goes; but readers who turn to the linguist's own writing (i.e., *Course in General Linguistics*, cited in at least two of Silva's many copious and helpful footnotes throughout the book) will find more of an opponent than an advocate. Second, the chaos of modern criticism, developing in part from Saussure's thought, helps to explain why the Bible, or any other text, is often misread. In all fairness, *God, Language, and Scripture* has a wholesome, positive tone that is gently prescriptive rather than forcibly corrective. Even so, readers need a bit more reference to certain details about Saussure's ideas and the rise of modernism, commentary all the more needful given Silva's apology in the appendix for the study of biblical languages.

Otherwise, *God, Language, and Scripture* is a pleasure to read. Its sparkling wit and anecdotal style sustain the reader's interest throughout. One memorable example is the quip about excessive use of chiasm in reading biblical texts. To one researcher's claim that the Epistle to the Galatians is one giant chiasm, Silva replies: “More often than not, proposals of this sort are characterized by . . . source-critical surgery” (p. 123). Silva's touch here and in many similar passages exudes a sensitivity rarely found in books about linguistics. This wit enhances another effective device, the many vivid illustrations of words, phrases, and clauses from biblical languages. Instead of citing a few examples or discussing other strengths (a great temptation indeed), I shall defer to my reader's own experience with the book—what in all likelihood will be a

lively interaction with a well-written, engaging contribution to the intersection between biblical studies and that peculiarly modern fascination with language.

BRANSON L. WOODARD, JR.  
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

*Ignatius Loyola: a Biography of the Founder of the Jesuits*, by Philip Caraman, S.J. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990. Pp. 222. \$22.95. Cloth.

This reliable but not exceptional life of Loyola portrays him as saint and sinner. Although the Roman Catholic Church canonized him in 1622, it is evident from the book that Ignatius once led a dissolute life of drinking, dueling, and debauchery. Caraman, a Jesuit himself, describes his subject as an adventurous *courtier* who enjoyed the pleasures of the flesh until a dramatic conversion transformed him into a zealous soldier of God.

In contrast with the image of Loyola as an austere, remote, and ascetic enemy of Protestant heretics, Caraman presents him as a cordial, warm-hearted, sensitive human being with a fervent love for God and man. He appears in this study as a profound mystic who enjoyed direct revelations to which he responded obediently. Ignatius suffered a serious and painful leg wound that threatened to end his life. During convalescence he sought the aid of St. Peter, and he credited that Apostle's intercession as the means that saved him. Loyola read the lives of several Catholic saints in which he found much inspiration, and he claimed that a vision of the Virgin Mary changed him forever. Where he long struggled against sensuality, he related that the visitation of Christ's mother freed him from all such temptations. He thereafter resolved that his life would be a pilgrimage of penance and service to his church. It is clear that Ignatius believed that he had to expiate his own sins by self-denial and good works, and he became an outstanding example of late medieval piety.

Like some other figures of religious history, Ignatius Loyola suffered from recurrent depressions, perhaps related to his uncertainty about his standing with God. Despite occasional visions and subjective revelations, he could not achieve assurance of salvation, for the works-righteousness teaching of the Roman Catholic Church did not allow for that. He wrote the *Spiritual Exercises*, "a manual for the practical purpose of helping a man to save his soul and find his place in the divine plan" (p. 41).

No perceptive reader of this book could fail to be impressed with the sincerity and disciplined devotion of its subject to his ideals. Loyola and his disciples in the Society of Jesus became a powerful force in the Counter-Reformation struggle against Protestantism. Their territorial and numerical successes are undeniable tributes to their devotion to duty as they understood it. It is evident, however, that they failed to understand the Christian faith properly and so committed themselves to the propagation and defense of a false gospel. The Jesuits categorically denied the Protestant principles *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, and *sola fide*. For about the first 300 years of their history they sought to destroy Protestantism by all available means. One must



acknowledge, of course, that their motive in doing so was to seek the salvation of heretics. Loyola and his company will ever remain examples of misplaced zeal. This book, although it contains little that is new, is a fine one with which to begin a study of the Jesuit phenomenon.

JAMES EDWARD MCGOLDRICK  
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

*Luther's Scottish Connection*, by James Edward McGoldrick. Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989. Pp. 122. \$26.50. Cloth.

Martin Luther is usually identified with initiating the Protestant Reformation with emphasis on his accomplishments in Germany. John Knox is normally considered the most significant person in the Scottish reform movement. However, the way for Knox was paved by others including, according to the author, Martin Luther.

Knox was a little-known follower of George Wishart, a Protestant who was martyred in Scotland less than two weeks after the death of Luther in Germany. The future leader of Scottish reform would undergo several years of development before establishing a Calvinistic church in Scotland. However, McGoldrick seeks to demonstrate that one cannot overlook the influence of Luther's ideas on Knox himself as well as upon other reformers in Scotland.

McGoldrick claims no originality of ideas but purposed to bring together in one study material presenting the influence of Luther on Scotland by carefully and capably collecting data which allows the reader the benefit of learning about the influx of Luther's ideas into Scotland, leaders such as Patrick Hamilton (martyred in Scotland in 1528) and lesser known but important men such as William Arth, Alexander Seton, Henry Forrest, Alexander Alesius, John Gau and Henry Belnaves all serve as links in the Lutheran chain.

Acknowledging the great influence of John Calvin and the Genevan community upon Knox, McGoldrick presents briefly a perceived Lutheran influence in the areas of justification by faith, predestination and the eucharist. Fully aware of the similar Calvinistic emphasis on the first two of these concerns, McGoldrick argues that Knox followed the Lutheran flow of argumentation for predestination rather than the Calvinistic reasoning. Recognizing the disagreement that existed between sixteenth century Lutheran and Calvinistic ideas concerning the eucharist, the author contends that there is a "lingering influence of Luther's teaching" in the expressions by Knox on the subject. McGoldrick's assertions are interesting but a more thorough development would have served to support the argument better.

The twenty-five page appendix, "A Brief Treatise of Master Patrick Hamilton Called *Patrick's Places*," is a valuable addition to the work and provides the reader the privilege of doing primary source study.

Some printing errors are found in the book. On page 18, line 23, a comma rather than a period should follow *Hall*. The word *forgiven* is misspelled on page 46, line 20. The word *new* in line 14 of page 59 should be capitalized in order to conform to the way the *New Testament* is found elsewhere in the

book. In line 23 of page 62, the second *in* should be *of*. For reasons left unexplained, the quotation from *Patrick's Places* on page 46 is rendered in modern English while the same statements in the appendix are not, though the same source is the basis for both.

For those interested in the spread of Luther's reforming influence beyond Germany and, especially, for those lacking an awareness of Protestant influences in Scotland prior to the reforming efforts of Knox, McGoldrick has made a commendable contribution. This work joins a previous effort, *Luther's English Connection*, in helping students of the Reformation grow in their awareness of the unity of a movement which is most often viewed in the variety of its expressions.

RONALD T. CLUTTER  
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Teaching for Christian Hearts, Souls and Minds: A Constructive Holistic Approach To Christian Education*, by Locke E. Bowman, Jr. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990. Pp. 118. \$15.95. Cloth.

Locke Bowman's thesis is that religious education is generally conducted in a fragmented, piecemeal fashion with not enough emphasis given to wholeness, organic thinking, and an overall framework guiding what and why Biblical concepts are taught. He believes church teachers should marry the particular with the general, the affective and the cognitive, and content with form. He rightly believes that dependence upon a publisher's curriculum is no substitute for the teacher knowing the subject well and evidencing a real and personal commitment to the Lord.

Bowman recommends that Christians work to make the Biblical language a common one again among the American populace. He notes that the public has reduced the Biblical language to a limited and contextual role. To this he says, if they do not understand, teach. He resists trendy efforts at contemporization of the Biblical text.

The author acknowledges that many of his ideas are drawn from Rabbi Max Kadushin and from the Benedictine and Catholic traditions. Bowman follows the Rabbi in conceiving of the great spiritual/religious ideas as "value concepts," held warmly as "common ideas/folk ideas." In particular, Bowman lists four concepts: God's love, God's justice, the Gospel of Christ, and the Church. He believes Christians should "avoid purely abstract definitions and analysis of the great words that signify vital, organic concepts" (p. 49). He repeatedly notes that Scripture's "magni-concepts" cannot be defined.

Bowman argues that faith is different from systematic theology and philosophy, believes that faith is mystical, and recommends that Christians look to people and experience for fideistic insight. To support his interpretation, he frequently cites Scripture, Church practice and liturgy, and tradition as apparently equally authoritative sources of spiritual understanding.

Bowman's discussion is infected with a kind of theological anti-intellectualism which can only lead to skepticism. His emphasis on "concepts" relativizes a rational understanding of the "words" of the Bible. His recommendation

that Christians avoid teaching Scripture as a "technical body of knowledge" as well as worry less about the logical consistency of the Scriptural message is a way to detach Christianity from a verbally inspired Biblical text.

Bowman's emphasis on teaching Biblical language contradicts his belief that Biblical concepts cannot be defined. How can one teach Biblical truth if its definition is ever elusive? In fact, how can one know truth if by implication it has no immutability, objectivity and eternity? Bowman's text is an exercise in subjectivity. The real problem with this approach is that everyone ends up creating his own faith. "It's true for me. It works. It's of God."

Bowman's text undermines a reasoned faith. His assertion that the Bible is not a "servant of logic" is theologically dangerous, as is his recommendation that Christians search for evidence of the presence of God in living human beings but not for systematic lines of reasoning about Biblical truth.

Romans 12:1-2 makes it clear that Christians are transformed by the renewing of their mind. God's Word is logically coherent and consistent and man is a reasoning being if not always reasonable. Peoples' grasp of right doctrine does not necessarily produce right living, but right living is only possible via right doctrine.

Other problems plague the text. For example, Bowman does not document why he believes liberals are less inclined to finger-pointing or that the Christian faith has always embraced revolution. And despite his dislike of trendy approaches to Biblical language, Bowman tends to use annoying terms like "clergy persons," "humankind," and "Christian personhood." While something can be learned from reading any book, this one is not recommended.

REX M. ROGERS  
THE KING'S COLLEGE

*The Environment and the Christian: What Does the New Testament Say about the Environment?* edited by Calvin B. DeWitt. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. 156. \$7.95. Paper.

*The Environment and the Christian* is a collection of essays on the New Testament's contribution to Christian environmental stewardship. The essays, which originated at a forum sponsored by the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies, are well researched and extensively documented. Unlike some collections of essays, the contributions complement each other and present a rather complete treatment of a single theme. As in all anthologies, however, the contributions vary in quality.

The authors believe that the complacency of the church toward environmental issues is partially due to a failure to understand not only the New Testament teaching but also the unity of Scripture. The authors note that most Christian writing on the environmental crisis has been based on the Old Testament. Many Christians assume that environmental stewardship must also be found in the New Testament for it to be truly Christian. The book is primarily addressed to those who hold this view in that it challenges this assumption and corrects the false notion that the New Testament is devoid of environmental themes.

In the introduction DeWitt mentions seven degradations of creation: (1) land conversion and habitat destruction, (2) species extinction, (3) land degradation, (4) resource conversion and wastes and hazards production, (5) global toxification, (6) alteration of planetary exchange, and (7) human and cultural degradation. At the end of each section he asks what the New Testament teaches regarding the particular degradation. He answers his questions in the epilogue where he concludes that the New Testament does not provide specifics but rather gives a framework by which to respond to the environmental crisis in general.

Loren Wilkinson argues for the cosmic dimension of the gospel where Christ is recognized as creator and redeemer of the earth. He finds "cosmic links" in three key passages: John 1:1-3, Col 1:15-23, Heb 1:1-3. This leads him to suggest that "world" in John 3:16 refers to the entire cosmos and to assert that "the cosmic concern of salvation is a central theme of the New Testament." After reviewing various theories of the atonement, Wilkinson sets forth the atonement as the renewal of creation. As Wilkinson observes, this reverses the way salvation is understood in Western theology.

Ronald Manahan develops the theme of Christ being the second Adam who undoes the damage caused by the first Adam (Rom 5:12-19). The damage is not only to the spiritual welfare of humans, but to the cosmos because of the solidarity of creation.

The most provocative essay is "The Kingdom of God and the Stewardship of Creation" by Gordon Zerbe, the only contributor not identified with a biographical sketch. Zerbe contends that the "New Testament projects a vision of the kingdom of God that is full of implications for a Christian environmental ethic." That ethic is based on a vision of how things ought to be, and how things ought to be is defined by the term righteousness (i.e., in right relationship). The kingdom of God involves the restoration of the entire cosmos to its original state and the reestablishing of righteousness, peace, and harmony. Its presence and futurity are linked in the ethics of the new community. The presence of the kingdom means that this restoration has already commenced, a reality that obligates the new community to live by a new order of conduct.

The book contains five essays, an introduction, epilogue, appendix reviewing literature concerning environmental stewardship and the New Testament, and indices. Although a few of the interpretations appear forced, the book overall is a valuable treatment and can be recommended to anyone interested in a Christian perspective of environmental issues.

RICHARD A. YOUNG  
CHATTANOOGA, TN

*Shaping Character: Moral Education in the Christian College*, by Arthur F. Holmes. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991. Pp. 82. \$7.95. Paper.

This text is a primer on the transmission of values the author calls moral education or ethics. It is the result of a 1986 Christian College Consortium

project called "Ethics Across the Curriculum" involving both faculty and curriculum development. The project, coordinated by Arthur Holmes, attempted to reawaken interest in the vision of nineteenth century moral philosophy courses. The project and this book represent a faculty desire to develop students' ethical perception, wisdom, and character.

Holmes' book is an introduction that "concentrates on distinctively Christian concerns both in the objectives it proposes and in the questions it raises about moral development theory and moral education in general" (p. ix). Holmes believes ethics should be everyone's business because it is an essential part of higher education to a liberally educated person, because it should be a distinctive emphasis in Christian higher education, and because values are intrinsic to both the subject matter taught and the way it is taught. Ethics, he believes, is also important because it provides for a discussion of moral educational objectives like consciousness-raising and sensitizing, values analysis, clarification, and criticism, moral imagination, ethical analysis, moral decision making, responsibility as an agent, virtue development, and moral identity.

Holmes is opposed to both moralizing and indoctrination as approaches to moral education. Both techniques fail in developing students' ability to think for themselves in the face of often ambiguous moral questions and hard decisions in a fast-changing age. Students' critical thinking skills must be developed so that students not only know *what* they value but also *why* they value and what they *ought* to value.

For the author, neither moralizing nor indoctrination are right or safe. Students must learn to analyze, understand, and make wise Biblically-informed judgments. Memorized answers and proof-texting are not enough.

In Holmes' view, moral education in today's social climate requires both theological and philosophical literacy, and it involves both affective and cognitive objectives. Christian colleges must therefore be faithful in instructing students in identifying Biblical values (ideals, good desired ends). But Christian colleges must be aware that values cannot be imposed or legislated. The Holy Spirit must develop students' cognitive and affective understanding of God's purposes, and spiritual development (sanctification) must progress with moral development.

Holmes takes a stand on what has long been a criticism of the values clarification movement and what has recently been a debate among faculty members in Christian colleges. Should professors assume a "value neutral" or a "value advocacy" posture with respect to the major questions presented in the classroom?

Professors employing a values clarification approach have been rightly challenged for developing students' ability to identify and even debunk the values students currently hold, while not providing them with a trustworthy or even coherent set of new values. In this manner, the values clarification approach tended to encourage relativism, individualism, and naturalism. On the other hand, some professors argue that students need, want, and pay for the mature judgment of their teachers.

Holmes advocates advocacy, particularly in a Christian context. "Simply telling people what to decide will not teach them how to think through a new

issue in the future and reach a wise decision for themselves. On the other hand, moral neutrality on the part of the teacher will not be helpful either: it implies there is little more to choose between and, still more important, it denies the value of modeling moral concern and commitment. Some kind of moral advocacy is needed that will go beyond a neutral stance . . . without engaging in unanalytic indoctrination" (p. 57).

Holmes has not presented many new thoughts in this book for anyone who is reasonably conversant with a Christian philosophy of education. But the book rings true. It is encouraging to hear a mature and experienced thinker emphasize the importance of developing students' values and thinking skills via professor modeling. Professors in Christian colleges occupy strategic vocations in God's vineyard, and when they fail as they have too often done in recent years, faulty fruit is borne if any fruit matures at all.

This book is a good introduction to ethics for non-philosophers, and it will be particularly valuable as a supplementary text for Christian college students.

REX M. ROGERS  
THE KING'S COLLEGE

*Reinventing Evangelism*, by Donald C. Posterski. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989. Pp. 202. \$9.95. paper.

*Reinventing Evangelism* is a provoking book combining the best of two worlds—studies in evangelism and world view or culture. This book challenges believers to use the information concerning the changing face of North American culture and integrate it with creative forms of evangelism. As the author states in the prologue, "This book has been written with the Bible in one hand and computer printouts in the other" (p. 1). It confronts Christians with the necessity of leaving their comfort zones to meet their neighbors, some of whom will have personal habits and lifestyles which are repulsive. It is a challenge to show and tell providing many pertinent examples and illustrations. For those familiar with Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture*, Posterski follows the option entitled, "Christ transforming culture" (page 167).

Posterski points out the alarming trend that is evidenced by research—there is no discernible difference between the people who go to church on Sunday and the people who go golfing on Sunday (p. 2). "Christians seem to have little to offer beyond the invitation to a privatized faith experience and some new social contacts" (p. 2). *Reinventing Evangelism* is an attempt to explain this disturbing trend and offer solutions. Some would point to the obvious—many of these are not true Christians, however, Posterski sees part of the problem as ineffective evangelism and attempts to correct the problem with this book. We must learn creative ways to share the gospel story and make it relevant to the personal issues that people face every day.

The author introduces the concept of a Christian "meaning maker" in chapter two as a solution. A meaning-maker is a person who can make the most sense out of life because they have inside information (page 32). The essentials to becoming a meaning-maker: (1) Pray and experience God; (2) Care for people and yourself; and (3) Communicate all of God's truth (page 32).

He concludes the book with ten essential principles for Christians desiring to engage their culture (p. 173ff.). These ten principles provide a good summary of the content of this book.

1. We must resist assimilation by saying no to the world's invitation to conform to its standards and patterns.
2. We must reject abdication by not retreating into Christian ghettos thus succumbing to a false teaching of the Biblical doctrine of separation. "They will aim to keep their membership in good standing in both the church and the world" (p. 174).
3. We must treat individuals the way God treated us by allowing them the permission to choose what they want to believe and how they want to act.
4. We will recognize that all men are created in the image of God and we will accept them whether those people have accepted Jesus or not. He points out that this acceptance does not mean approval nor agreement.
5. We will choose to value people for who they are and understand that everyone has been touched by the goodness of God's creation. This will keep us from reducing people to evangelistic projects.
6. Christians will assume that Christ's mission is their mission and live with an intentional commitment to influence people. This will cause interactions with people for the purpose of moving them toward God.
7. Christians who engage the culture will bring the truth of God's world into life situations. They will enjoy the people God brings into their life and those who do not know God will be intrigued by their wholeness.
8. Christians will remember that God is the creator and they are the created ones. They will consistently experience God personally and intercede for those who move in and out of their lives.
9. Faithful Christians will do more than speak good words, they will demonstrate the good news with caring deeds.
10. The Christian who engages the culture will interact with ideas. They will struggle to find God's point of view on issues of personal interest and on the broader issues of social concern. They will speak the truth, interpret the times, and expect God to miraculously break into their circumstances.

Posterski possesses a good knowledge of North American culture and proposes some simple yet challenging means of communicating the good news. He doesn't hide the fact that there will be obstacles some of our own making. He makes a strong statement about the "numbing effect of Christian radio and television" (page 86).

Some will have problems with the use of Mother Teresa as a model of a modern Christian (page 112), however, in the context of the chapter she provides a tremendous example. Those from a strict separatist or legalistic background will view this book as compromise. I think it is a welcome addition to the body of literature concerning evangelism.

Donald Posterski is the general director of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Canada. He is the author of other books including, *Why I Am Afraid to*

*Tell You I'm A Christian? Friendship, Friendship, and The Emerging Generation* (coauthored with Reginald Bibby). He is a recognized expert on youth culture.

MARK T. TOTTEN  
NASHVILLE BIBLE COLLEGE

*The Middle East Maze: Israel and Her Neighbors*, by David A. Rausch. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. Pp. 208. Paper.

David A. Rausch, professor of history at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio, states his purpose in the introduction to the book: "As diplomats still deal with the question of Israel's existence as a sovereign state among her Arab neighbors, one perceives the complexity of the Middle East maze. This book will give the reader the historical background necessary to put these deep feelings into context and to provide the reader with the milieu of the modern Middle East" (p. 16). This work will be particularly helpful to college students, who are not aware of Middle East events from the past forty years, and are trying to understand the tensions that exist in the current peace talks. Much of the information will be an excellent review for those who have read the newspaper and watched these events for the last four decades.

Rausch seeks to fulfill his goal by surveying the historical background, political developments, and governmental leaders of Middle Eastern countries, primarily focusing on developments from World War I through Desert Storm. The first two chapters are a historical overview of the concept of "Arab nation," and a definition of what is designated by the term "Palestine." He traces the major events that gave rise to the Jewish state of Israel. In his interpretation of these events, Rausch communicates a very pro-Israel message and a very anti-Palestinian sentiment. Palestinians are characterized as terrorists, despised by all Arab countries and deceitful politicians who cannot be trusted (pp. 41-53). On the other hand, Israelis are portrayed as innocent victims, who were forced into war and occupational roles, only motivated by a need for survival. As one who has lived on the Green Line between the Palestinians and Israelis, and travelled with UN peace keeping officers into the occupied territories, I can testify that there is guilt on both sides, and a need for a more balanced view of these political events.

All Palestinians should not be characterized with the image that this book implies. Rausch does not include in his survey the many terrorist acts that were also committed by Israelis against the British and Palestinians (ex. bombing of the King David Hotel). Christians must remember that there are many brothers and sisters in Christ amongst the Palestinians who are living under oppressive conditions forced on them by the tensions between Israel and the PLO.

Chapter three traces the influence of the Christian community on the political establishment of the state of Israel. Rausch documents books, periodicals, political figures, major conference movements, and the theological camps of premillennialists and inerrantists to reveal the support for Israel from its formation on May 14, 1948, until today.

Chapters four through eight focus on Israel's neighbors and political enemies. Each chapter addresses two countries and includes a survey of their for-



mation, major political leaders, historical events in relationship to modern Israel, and statistics on losses during the various Middle East wars. These chapters could have been enhanced with documentation of various sources as well as additional evidence for some of Rausch's conjectures (ex. Qaddafi and the purchase of American hostage Peter Kilburn (p. 146). He does include a bibliography which helps to make up for this deficiency.

The final chapter looks at Israel and the lessons learned through the Persian Gulf war. Rausch offers insights about events that led up to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait as well as the difficult position that Israel found herself in during the conflict. He concludes that "For the time being, America's interests lie in a strong Israel" (p. 185). I concur with this statement, but also believe that Americans, and particularly Christians, must moderate our views with a reasonable, just, and compassionate attitude towards the many innocent neighboring peoples, who are caught in the powerful struggles of Middle East politics.

JOHN A. McLEAN

GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST COLLEGE



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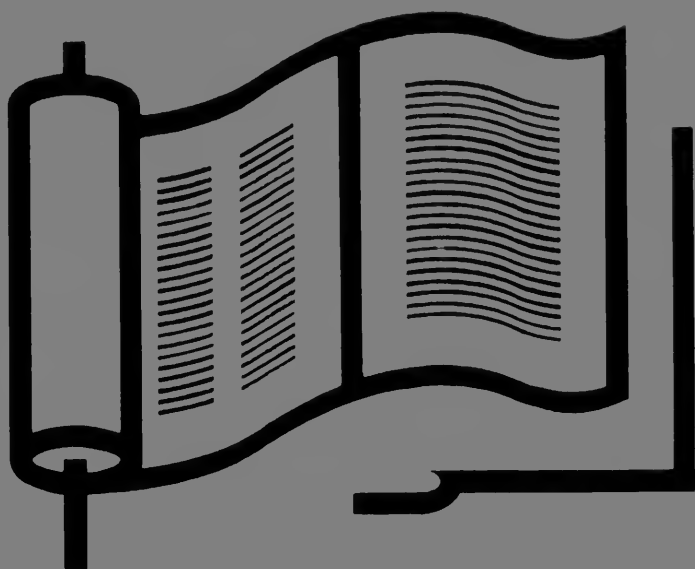
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# Grace Theological Journal

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# GRACE THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

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## MANAGING EDITOR'S NOTE

On March 20–21, 1992, the Midwest Regional Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society took place at Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana. The theme for the conference was *Law and the Gospel*. This issue of *GTJ* consists of papers, some in revised form, presented at the five plenary sessions and one workshop. We thank the presenters for their willingness to offer these papers for publication. A variety of viewpoints was presented on the theme of the conference and positions espoused in these papers are not necessarily those of the *GTJ* committee or Grace Theological Seminary. These papers are being offered to our reading public due to the interest today in this topic and the quality of the material presented.

We regret that in our previous number, 12:1 (Spring 1991), the final two lines of "The Soteriology of James 2:14," by Gale Z. Heide, were not printed. The concluding paragraph to the article should read:

Finally, as students of the Bible, we must continually recognize that encounters such as these are not exercises in futility, but rather are a blessing to our soul as we grow in Christian maturity and become more familiar with the Word of God. We must continually approach the Bible as our main sustenance, our "daily bread." We can only know our God as well as we study and learn about Him in the Self-revelation of His Word.

Our apologies have been extended to the author for this printing error.

It is with regret that we announce that the *Grace Theological Journal* ceases publication with this issue as a result of changes in the philosophy of seminary education and personnel at Grace Theological Seminary. I wish to thank Dr. Donald L. Fowler, Dr. Gary T. Meadors and especially our Administrative Assistant, Mrs. Rebecca A. Inman, who have served faithfully with me these last two years of publication as the committee overseeing the *GTJ* operation. Much has been accomplished through the efforts of a small group.

Persons with outstanding subscriptions will be reimbursed automatically by Grace Schools subsequent to the mailing of Issue 12:2. It may take several months for this process to be completed. Please do not write for reimbursement unless there is an address change that needs to be made or a reasonable time has elapsed after receiving 12:2. Persons wishing back issues from our inventory may purchase those at the following prices:

Issues 1:1–7:2 are \$2.00 each (except 3:1–2, which are out of print, and the larger 6:2 issue)

Issues 6:2 and 8:1–11:2 are \$3.00 each

Issues 12:1–2 are \$6.00 each

Though the publication of *GTJ* comes to an end we trust that its ministry will continue as articles of enduring value remain a contribution to the church of Jesus Christ.

Ronald T. Clutter  
Managing Editor

## THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL IN LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

DAVID P. SCAER

A NON-LUTHERAN friend of mine sent me the account of an inter-denominational meeting in which a fire broke out. The reactions of each denomination were predictable. The Presbyterian elected a chairperson, whose task was to appoint a committee to report to the Session. The Methodists pondered the implications of the fire for the blessed assurance of salvation. The Roman Catholics took a collection for rebuilding. Baptist were heard asking loudly where was the water. The Congregationalists cried out: "Every man for himself." The Lutherans decided that the fire was against either a) the law or b) the gospel, and was in any event unlawful. That indelicate introduction may have been on the mind of your planning committee in having a Lutheran lead off on the topic of the law and the gospel.

Simply through over use I have developed a dislike for theological cliches. My unfavored ones include 'word and sacrament' and 'means of grace', but my most favorite unfavored remains 'law and gospel'. Reciting cliches provides no guarantee that the sublime realities which they intend to represent are presented. I am sure that we agree that the law and the gospel should be preached, but I am not so certain that the use of a cliché, including this one, accomplishes the task. Somehow even more experienced preachers can ascend the high pulpit and use the law and gospel cliché and by doing only this have preached neither the law nor the gospel. The real challenge is to preach the law and the gospel without ever using these terms. By themselves each of these terms is open to misinterpretation. Such phrases as 'gospel ministry', 'gospel preaching', 'evangelist', which is only the Greek derivative for 'a gospel preacher', can in common parlance refer to revivals and revivalist preaching, which can be strongly law orientated. On the other hand the invitation to live by the gospel can be no more than an enticement to moral license without any imperatives whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A certain John Agricola taught that repentance was not to be taught from gospel and not the law. This position was condemned by Formula of Concord V and VI, the articles on the law and the third use of the law. *The Book of Concord*, tr. and ed. by

I would like to address the following subtopics under the heading of the law and the gospel: (1) The law and the gospel as a characteristic of Lutheran theology. (2) How does the law and gospel relate to our understanding about God? (3) Overcoming the contradiction between the law and the gospel. (4) The traditional three uses of law with special attention to the third use. (5) The law and the gospel as a hermeneutical instrument. (6) The law and the gospel as a homiletical device.

### 1. *The Law and the Gospel as a Characteristic of Lutheran Theology*<sup>2</sup>

The law and the gospel expresses the human dilemma in which the Christian experiences what he can only understand as a contradiction in a God who hates and loves him at the same time.<sup>3</sup> St. Paul to contrast his former life in Phariseism and new life in Christ speaks of the bondage of the law and the freedom of the gospel. Paul's use of these words in this way does not prevent him from using these words in other ways and should not be made normative for the rest of the Scriptures. Law can refer to the first part of the Old Testament canon or the entire canon. The psalmist (Ps 1:2) who delights and walks in God's law is not as much morally self-confident, as he finds confidence in the salvation of God's people as recorded in the Pentateuch. Torah is the account of Israel's redemption from the bondage of Egypt with the promise that God will continue to act redemptively in behalf of his people. Torah, the written law or Scripture, is what we would call gospel, the promise of salvation, in the phrase the law and the gospel. In the New Testament law, *nomos*, can also be a synonym for the gospel, as in the phrase the law of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Gospel can mean the message Jesus preached, the message about Jesus, or one of the four books about

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Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959) 558–68. This edition of the Lutheran Confessions is simply called 'Tappert'.

<sup>2</sup>For an extensive discussion, see Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism I* (tr. Walter A. Hansen; St. Louis: Concordia, 1962) 17–178. Elert's section on the law reflects Lutheran thinking with its title "Under the Wrath of God" (17–50).

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Eugene F. Klug, "The Third Use of the Law," *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord* (ed. Robert D. Preus and Wilbert Rosin; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1978), 187–204, esp. 188–89. "Luther could not have put their existential tie in the sinner's life more graphically than when he compared the Law to the upper grindstone and the Gospel to the lower grindstone. The Law crushes pretension of self-achieved righteousness out of the human breast; the Gospel breathes life and forgiveness into the smitten breast."

<sup>4</sup>For a detailed discussion of law, *nomos*, see *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament I*, ed. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988). In Rom 5:13 it is used of regulations (395). In John 10:34, *nomos* is used of the Old Testament Scriptures (395–96). In Rom 8:2 it is used for principle and in the first case refers to the gospel and the second the law: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me from the law of sin and death" (426–27).

Jesus, which contains both law and gospel.<sup>5</sup> Taking an oath by the gospel is taking an oath by the first four books of the New Testament Scriptures. In this sense both gospel and law (*nomos*) can refer to written Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> We should not even bother ourselves in saying that Old Testament is law because it predominates the message there and that the New Testament is gospel for the same reason. Historically these words have been manipulated to cause theological confusion. For Marcion the law represented the inferior revelation of the Old Testament to be replaced by his narrowly defined canon of the New Testament as the gospel. Whether this manipulation was done ignorantly or deliberately, Marcion's procedure has reappeared under other guises.

For Martin Luther the law and the gospel expressed his own existential experience, not totally unlike that of St. Paul. The law described the early period of life in which he attempted to convince himself of personal salvation through works prescribed by medieval Catholicism. This contrasted with the new found freedom in the gospel of the Reformation. For him the catholicism of his day offered the gospel as if it were the law. The Roman Church did not deny the fundamentals of the faith, but presented them as demand. Luther's resolution of his personal dilemma by the Biblical data which promised freedom and not demand in the gospel was perhaps more than any other factor the primary cause of the Reformation.<sup>7</sup> Law was demand and the gospel was God's free gift in Christ. In these senses we use these words in this essay.

If Luther resolved the dilemma of the law and the gospel theologically, he never resolved it existentially. For as long as he lived he understood himself as standing condemned and forgiven before God at the same time. It was not simply a matter of being rescued once, at one time, from law's condemnation by the gospel's emancipation. As long as he lived he was weighed down by the law from which he was freed by the gospel. The contradiction can be resolved theoretically, but never really within human experience. The law and the gospel are simultaneous words of God to the Christian and not subsequent ones. The resolution of the tension between the law and the gospel is their destruction. Lutheran theology uses the Latin phrase *simul iustus et peccator* to express this existential dilemma.<sup>8</sup> Even the mature Christian

<sup>5</sup>John Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark & Luke* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1992) 235.

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of terms in a Lutheran perspective, see Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* III (tr. Walter W. F. Albrecht; St. Louis: Concordia, 1953) 222–24. Pieper is developing an argument presented in the Formula of Concord VI (Tappert, 478).

<sup>7</sup>Luther's Reformation discovery is associated with what has been called his 'tower experience'. There is scholarly debate as to the date, but none to its being the turning point in his formation of his principle of justification. See E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950) 145–96.

<sup>8</sup>See Pieper III, 228–35, "Law and Gospels as Opposites."

never feels himself free from the sin and its curse. Christians die as much sinners as they do saints. Next to the person of Jesus Christ, no person has been the focus of more books than Luther. His contribution to theology, language, culture, government, and education is simply unmatched. Close to death, Luther was asked by his colleague Justus Jonas, "Reverend Father, are you willing to die in the name of Christ and the doctrine which you have preached?" He answered a distinct "Yes," heard by all in the room, and sank into a coma.<sup>9</sup> Among the notes found on his desk, which may have been his last written words: "The truth is, we are beggars."<sup>10</sup>

The law and the gospel did not express a chronological sequence but an existential awareness of God in which he finds himself as saint and sinner at the same time.<sup>11</sup> Lutherans should be a little uncomfortable with the line in "Amazing Grace" that "I once was lost but now I am found."<sup>12</sup> A profound sense of spiritual forsakenness persists as long as the Christian lives. In the confession of sins preceding the celebration of the Sunday Holy Communion, the Christian prays as a lost and condemned sinner that he does not deserve to be forgiven, but asks that God would receive him for the bitter sufferings and death of God's Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>13</sup> He is always in the position of penitent David praying Psalm 51: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy tender mercies. Against thee only have I sinned and done this great wickedness in thy sight."<sup>14</sup> He is always like Isaiah praying that he is a person of unclean lips. He is the unworthy centurion under whose roof Christ dare not come. He is Peter confessing sin and being restored.<sup>15</sup> The Christian forgives seven times seventy, because God in Christ has far exceeded that number. Within the liturgy of the Lutheran church, it

<sup>9</sup>Schwiebert, 750.

<sup>10</sup>John M. Todd, *Luther: A Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 370.

<sup>11</sup>This point is made by Lowell C. Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel* (Fallbrook, California: Verdict, 1980) 263. In speaking of the Christian as *simul iustus et peccator*, Luther "retained the paradox but meant instead that the believer was a sinner in the eyes of the world but was a just person in the sight of God and under God's forensic declaration for the sake of Christ and His righteousness. . . . This insight of the reformers [Luther and Melancthon] was tragically confused in ensuing years. If some seventeenth-century dogmatists not only tended to distinguish justification and sanctification but also to separate them, the eighteenth century pietists went to the opposite extreme. They thought one was a sinner and then a just person (in a before-and-after arrangement) rather than simultaneously sinful and just through forensic justification."

<sup>12</sup>This hymn by John Newton is found in *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1982) 509.

<sup>13</sup>*Lutheran Worship*, 138–39.

<sup>14</sup>The conclusion of Psalm 51, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord," ordinarily precedes the celebration of the Holy Communion (*Lutheran Worship*, 143–44).

<sup>15</sup>In the Order of the Confessional Service of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, the Christian as a penitent sinner is to compare himself with David, Peter, the sinful woman and the prodigal son (St. Louis: Concordia, 1941) 48.

is not impossible to pray the Lord's Prayer several times: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."<sup>16</sup> The Christian cannot escape the contradiction of the God who rejects him for not fulfilling the law and at the same time loves him in Christ. The law and the gospel theme is problematic simply because of this contradiction and is theologically troublesome because of the attempts to resolve this contradiction. This contradiction must be addressed.

The law and the gospel theme is more crucial for understanding the genius of Lutheran theology as it leaves the Christian in a continued unresolved contradiction of being a sinner, even though he has been declared a saint by the gospel. *Lex semper accusat*, the law always accuses,<sup>17</sup> traditionally known as the second use of the law.<sup>18</sup> Lutherans are hardly alone in understanding the law as accusatory, but it characterizes their approach as its major use or so it seems. The Reformed have traditionally put the weight on the third use of the law as a guide in Christian life. The Arminians have down played the law in favor of the gospel, but still the emphasis is on the Christian life with the possibility of moral progress or even perfectionism, though perfectionism is a goal never realized.<sup>19</sup> The Lutheran position is perhaps the most philosophically unsatisfying because the Christian is continually confronted by a God who hates and loves him at the same time. He cannot escape it. This allows no sense of self-satisfaction or accomplishment. He sees himself going nowhere. He is always starting all over again. He is not the saint who occasionally sins, but the saint who feels himself in such a constant state of siege that he still understands himself as sinner. Such a view in which the law and the gospel are severely contrasted may however actually be the emotionally most satisfying, because it explains the human dilemma of knowing that we never really do what is required of us.

At this point the Christological factor must be introduced. Certainly there can be no suggestion that Christ is a sinner, but like the Christian who is at the same rejected and accepted in the law and the gospel,

<sup>16</sup>The Lord's Prayer is used by Lutherans at Baptism and Ordination and in the Holy Communion and the minor services of Matins, Vespers' Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline. According to Luther's Small Catechism it is to be prayed along with the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed by the family in Morning and Evening Prayer and also before and after meals (*Lutheran Worship*, 305).

<sup>17</sup>Apology IV, 38 (Tappert 112). "For the law always accuses and terrifies consciences. It does not justify, because a conscience terrified by the law flees before God's judgment."

<sup>18</sup>*Lex est Deus accusans et damnans; evangelium est Deus absolvens et iustificans* (Pieper III, 250).

<sup>19</sup>This position came over into Lutheranism through Pietism which had roots in Reformed theology and was akin to English Methodism. For a scholarly discussion of Pietistic influence in Lutheran theology, see Carter Lindberg, *The Third Reformation* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer, 1983) 131-78, "The 'Second Reformation'—Pietism."

Christ in his atonement is accepted and rejected by God at the same time. He who is abhorrent to God on account of our sin is the sweet smelling sacrifice. He who is slain by God is also raised by him. Christ becomes a paradigm for the Christian's life. He experiences to the extreme what the Christian does in his daily life, a dilemma which he cannot escape.<sup>20</sup> This severe contrast or dichotomy between law and gospel, of being rejected and accepted by God, can degenerate into an unbridled dualism with disastrous consequences in any ontological understanding of God. We must attempt to address this question next.

## *2. How Does the Law and Gospel Relate to Our Understanding about God?*

While the law and the gospel are intended to describe man's dilemma and not a contradiction within God, it is imperative to focus the category of law and gospel back on God himself. If his revelation to man can be described by the categories of law and gospel, can God be described in these terms? Let us answer this question in a preliminary way. Apart from the law-gospel category, I can have no authentic experience or valid knowledge of God, but this contradiction cannot possibly exist in God. Marcion and Gnosticism resolved the contradiction philosophically in favor of the gospel by degrading the law. The Old Testament as law was seen as an inferior revelation in comparison to the New Testament as gospel. From that it followed that the New rather than the Old gave us the true picture of God. In fact different deities were posited for each testament.<sup>21</sup> This view resulted from a theological failure which required linguistic manipulation in assuming that the law referred solely to the Old Testament and the gospel to the New. It was only a minor confusion, but resulted in creating a religion that simply was not Christian. Dispensationalism has faced this dilemma not by a multiplicity of gods, but by positing periods or epochs of different revelations. God chooses to unveil different motives or plans of salvation. In its simplest form the religion of the gospel has replaced the religion of the law, though most forms of dispensationalism are more complex than this. No change is attributed to God, but to the way in which he deals with man. This approach in resolving the contradictions or differences at least raises the question of why the same God chooses to act in different periods of time in different ways. A similar approach

<sup>20</sup>See my "The Concept of *Anfechtung* in Luther's Thought," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 47 (1983) 15-29.

<sup>21</sup>Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition I* (2nd rev. ed.; tr. John Bowden; Atlanta: John Knox, 1975) 99. "Marcion is characterized by extreme dualism. In his '*Antithesis*', in complete contradiction to the Christian tradition from which he came, he assumed the existence of two gods, one of the Old Testament and another of the New."



is offered by *Religionsgeschichte* which in comparing religions sees an evolutionary process in man's search for God. Influential for any modern evolutionary theory of religion is Schleiermacher who assumed the religion of the law in the Old Testament was inferior to the gospel of the New.<sup>22</sup> German theology has never been able to escape this evolutionistic thought in religion in which the New Testament in offering the gospel is seen as superior to the Old Testament. We might quibble with their definition of the gospel, but the gospel regardless of how it is defined was viewed as superior to the law. The names of Adolph von Harnack and his step-disciple, Rudolph Bultmann, could also be mentioned. With both men Pauline theology with its clearer dogmatic outlines is seen as a regression from the pristine simple gospel of Jesus. Dispensationalism resolves the difficulty in favor of the epistles.<sup>23</sup> All these views share in common the attempt to resolve the tension between the law and the gospel by applying them to periods of time. Thus it is not uncommon to hear that God of the Old Testament was vengeful and wrathful, but the God of the New is loving. Though this does not intend to be a presentation in Biblical theology, I contend that it may be just the reverse should be argued. The God of the Old Testament was more patient and hence more loving than the God of the New Testament. The command to exterminate the Canaanites is no more severe than the warnings of Jesus that Jerusalem shall be leveled to rubble. This I offer for the sake of argument, as God is consistent in his love. As inadequate as these answers attempted by some (e.g., Marcion, Schleiermacher, dispensationalism) were in resolving the tension of the law and gospel, they did recognize how uncomfortable tensions are in theology, especially as they apply to God. The question is whether the law or the gospel are equal revelations of God.

This question becomes crucial. If we say that the law and the gospel have nothing to do with what God is in himself, then we are pushed in the direction of agnosticism. But if we say that the law and the gospel are revelations of God with equal force then we are forced into a dualism of seeing a God with competing motives to love and to hate at the same time, a form of Manicheanism. If we see law as primary, we seemingly deny the God whose ultimate revelation is in man's salvation. If we choose the gospel, we are threatened with anti-nomianism.

<sup>22</sup>Cf. James Dahl, "Friedrich Schleiermacher and His Renunciation of the Old Testament," a lecture delivered and distributed at the Midwestern Conference of the Evangelical Theological Society at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN, 20 March 1992. Dahl is an assistant professor at Trinity Seminary, Deerfield, Illinois and developed the lecture from a Ph.D. dissertation in process.

<sup>23</sup>The point was made in a lecture and defended by Myron J. Houghton, "Law and Gospel in Dispensational Tradition," given at the Midwest Evangelical Theological Society Meeting, Grace Seminary, Winona, Indiana, March 20, 1992.

Here lies a reason for the divisions within Christendom, even if it lies unrecognized beneath the surface.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. *Overcoming the Contradiction between the Law and the Gospel*

In the phrase the law and the gospel, the law is interpreted as requirements and prohibitions, what man is and is not allowed to do. Even a minor infraction incurs a penalty. The ultimate penalty is eternal separation from God. The Levitical laws set forth requirements and prohibitions with corresponding penalties and sacrifices. Thus the inescapable impression is that God is to be understood chiefly in terms of prescriptions with rewards for favorable behavior and penalties for transgressions.

The view provided by the gospel is that God chooses or elects Israel and continues to love her in spite of her failures. These failures are not merely ritual misdemeanors but gross blasphemies. But even ritual misdemeanors reflect a fundamental disregard for God. Minor regulations reflect larger principles. The ban against muzzling the ox is an extension of the higher principle that refusing to pay a salary commensurate with the work is stealing. In spite of all the spiritual felonies and liturgical misdemeanors, God preserves the remnant. The love of God then comes to its fullest expression in the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection of Christ and embraces all and not just Israel. From this picture the law is seen as negative in demanding and punishing and correspondingly the gospel is seen as positive in giving what the law demands. This distinction between the law and the gospel is called by the Formula of Concord V "an especially brilliant light."<sup>25</sup>

But which of these contradictory pictures is the true picture of God? Is God to be understood through the law or the gospel or both, but in a particular order? The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (IV 38) says the law always accuses: *lex enim semper accusat*. But this statement could not be true in an absolute sense. It speaks of man in the state of sin, the condition which he has experienced since the fall and will endure to the last day.<sup>26</sup> In this condition everyone is born and dies. Before the fall the law did not condemn and at death the law looses its authority. Even in this life the Christian as saint is not condemned by the law. Though law appears to man in the state of sin as

<sup>24</sup>Pieper discusses the differences that Lutherans have with Roman Catholics, the Reformed, and synergists under the category of the law and the gospel (I, 247–52).

<sup>25</sup>Tappert, 558.

<sup>26</sup>Lutherans distinguish man in the state before the fall, after the fall, regeneration and resurrection. Formula of Concord II (Tappert, 469). The law does not accuse in the first and the last conditions. In the condition of regeneration man as he is regenerated is not condemned, as sinner he is.

demanding and punishing, law as it exists in God is neither demanding nor punishing, but it is the positive affirmation expressing God's relationship to his creation. The transformation of law as positive affirmation into demand and punishment was caused by man's transgression. Within himself God is not an accumulation of moral negatives, but is throughout perfect love.

Understanding the law as positive affirmation is understood by man only during his brief stay in paradise. He knew God as his creator, accepted his responsibility for creation, and procreated. He was prohibited from stepping out of this positive relationship with God. But this prohibition is not arbitrarily superimposed on man to test him, but was simply the explanation or description of what would happen to man if he stepped outside of the relationship with God in which he was created. The indicative was its own imperative. Pardon the poor illustration, but it would be similar to the prohibition of shaving with an electric razor in the bathtub. This action imposes its own penalty. This is quite different from murdering someone. There the penalty must be superimposed from the outside.

Disregarding the prohibition is an unsatisfactory description of the cause of man's fall, if it suggests that God placed a negative in man's life. In the positive relationship man knew God's will and could do it. By stepping outside of the created order man brought calamity upon himself. The act provided its own consequences. In attempting to become like God he placed himself outside of a positive relationship with God, so that now God is seen as the enemy placing unjust demands upon him.<sup>27</sup> The First Commandment prohibiting the worship of other gods is in no sense the arbitrary act of God determined to exercise sovereignty, but only the natural or logical consequence of the oneness of God. What was totally positive is now seen as completely negative by man. The law in this primitive, positive sense is a necessary and not alien or inadequate reflection of God's essence. The law is not a code of arbitrary restrictions placed by a capricious God on man.<sup>28</sup>

The Ten Commandments are afterthought in that they address man in his fallen condition. The law had to be set forth negatively because man in a state of sin could no longer understand God as he is. Even the negative expression of the law which man knows in the state of sin is an inverse reflection of the law in its original positive forms. Because

<sup>27</sup>See my "Formula of Concord: Article VI," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 42 (1978) 145-55.

<sup>28</sup>At the end of his explanation to the first commandment in his Large Catechism, Luther writes: "Let it suffice for the First Commandment. We had to explain it at length since it is the most important. For, as I have said before, where the heart is right with God and this commandment is kept, fulfillment of all the others will follow of its own accord" (Tappert, 371).

of sin we are looking in from the outside and see an entirely different picture of God. The law which could be viewed as the positive relationship of God and man is now seen by man as an impossible burden. Man whose entire existence was committed to God must be told in uncertain terms that all other gods have no existence and dare not be worshipped. In paradise polytheism was not even in the range of possibilities. Outside of paradise all sins were not only in the range of possibilities, but became realities.

Sin transformed the law. For example the command not to murder reflects that God is life. This and the other negative assertions of the Commandments do not have an eternal origin in God, but are the positive commands of God reflecting his eternal nature, now transformed and translated into terms which man in the state of sin can understand. Even here the negative commands are bifurcated. Man can regulate his outward behavior by refraining from the evil prohibited by these negative commands, the so called first or civil use of the law, but he cannot control his inner and true self. He cannot put God before himself. The same law, which controls man's outward behavior, is addressed by God to man's inner self so that he becomes aware of his estrangement from God and his moral incapacity. This is known as the second use of the law. For the sake of his own sanity, he can ignore the law's piercing of his inner being or he can delude himself into believing that he has actually fulfilled it. In other cases he pretends it does not exist. He lives an amoral life with no reference to God or any law.

In the condition of sin, man is on the outside looking in. The gates of heaven and paradise are shut. He, not God, is responsible for his exclusion, for seeing law as a negative intrusion in his life. The "thou shalt not's" are of man's own doing. Now Christ enters into man's situation, takes his place, fulfills the law perfectly not only by refraining from all immorality but by doing positive good and then suffering the full consequences of man's fall. Christ understands and accepts God's no and yes in his life. Christ's fulfilling of the law becomes the gospel's content. Only where Christ in his atonement continually and always is preached is the Gospel being preached. By faith man is set within a positive relationship with God and man is free from the curse of the law and fulfills God's law both positively and negatively. Where Christ as living sacrifice and atonement as the end and completion of the law is not preached there is no gospel. There is no church. There is no salvation. But though the law and the gospel look contradictory to man in a state of sin, there is no contradiction in God. The God who created the world out of love and set man in a positive relationship with himself is the same God who redeems the world out of love. But the divine love revealed in the gospel not only has its origin in God's creative love for the world, but in God himself. The God who loved the world

in sending the Son is the same God who created the heavens and the earth. The Trinitarian doctrine is distorted beyond recognition when the Father is seen as the expression of law within God and the Son as love. God is love and the eternal generation of the Son from the Father, the creation of the world with its positive expression of the law, and the Gospel must be understood in terms of love. Thus God's redemption of the world must never be seen as incidental to God's essence, as if he did not want to do it or was even forced to do it. He wanted to do it and he wanted to do it because he is love. The gospel is the final revelation and expression of who God is. We are not dealing with different gods in the law and gospel or even different dispensations, but with the same God.

Even the translation or transformation of the law from positive description and affirmation into negative prohibition is an expression of divine love. By the horror of the law with its demands and punishments, God intended that man should be diagnosed as sinner to be receptive to the gospel.<sup>29</sup> In no way does God intend the law to be his last word to any man, even the man who is rejecting Christ. As severe as the law is, the law is God's alien work in that it does not reveal to us what God is really like. It is a saving work because it brings man to the depths of desperation where only the gospel can help him.<sup>30</sup> Rejecting the gospel is worse than any offense against the law, because it is not merely the refusal to conform to a divine code, but the rejection of God's free gift in Jesus Christ. Sins against the law have been covered by the atonement. Man's rejection of the atonement is not.

#### *4. The Traditional Three Uses of Law with Special Attention to the Third Use*<sup>31</sup>

Problematic is the use of the law in the Christian life, traditionally called the third use. Does this mean that since the Christian now lives his life freed from the law by the gospel, that he is free from directives of the law? Or is the opposite true? Is the law reintroduced as a regulating phenomenon in the Christian's life? There is no argument in Lutheran theology that the civil use of the law regulating outward behavior remains in force for everyone, including Christians. No better proof of this reality exists than driving along at 80 mph and seeing the red and blue lights of a state police car behind you. A letter from the IRS has the same effect. Since the law always accuses the sinner, it

<sup>29</sup>Formula of Concord V (Tappert, 560).

<sup>30</sup>In Lutheran theology the gospel is offered through preaching, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Office of the Keys [Absolution], and the church (Smalkald Articles III, IV; [Tappert, 310]).

<sup>31</sup>The three uses of the law are spelled out in Formula of Concord VI (Tappert, 563).

continues to function in this way in the life of the Christian who remains as much a sinner as a saint, *simul iustus et peccator*. The liturgy of the Lutheran Church following that of the ancient catholic and orthodox church allows for the worshipper continually to confess his sins and receive absolution. The daily commemoration of Baptism in Luther's *Small Catechism* requires that the old man die each day with all its evil lusts and desires and a new man be daily resurrected.<sup>32</sup>

Confusion on what is meant by the third use has led to its rejection by certain Lutheran theologians.<sup>33</sup> This is somewhat of an internal embarrassment, since the third use of the law is entitled to a separate article in the Formula of Concord, the definitive confessional document for Lutherans. For others the third use of the law has been interpreted simply to mean that the first and second uses of the law remain in force. Such a view is not the Lutheran one, even though some Lutherans have claimed this definition. The introduction of the law into the life of the Christian seems a legalistic intrusion denying the freedom of the gospel or turning the gospel into law because the gospel requires or demands certain types of behavior. In answering this ticklish question for Lutherans, I would like to make reference to Luther's understanding of the Ten Commandments in his *Small Catechism* as a way out of this dilemma. The reformer's explanations of the commandments, with the exception of the first and sixth, have two parts: negative prohibitions and positive requirements. Thus the one on killing prohibits bodily harm to our neighbor and requires providing for his physical needs. The one on stealing prohibits any attempt, even if it legal, to obtain the neighbor's property. Rather he is required to help the neighbor improve it. Luther by not mentioning outward robbery and murder assumes that the Christian simply will not do these things. Gross immorality is out of range for the Christian, but refraining from it does not even begin to fulfill the commandments. Any harm to the neighbor breaks the commandments. You may not rob the neighbor, but if you manipulate law or contract to deprive him of his property, you stand condemned. Perhaps Luther's delineation of the law of God to less than blatant transgressions is acceptable by all. But Luther reverses the negative prohibition into the positive requirement of helping the neighbor, especially in his distress. The prohibition against cursing God becomes a requirement to pray. Instead of saying foul things about our neighbor, even if they are true, we are to put the best construction on everything. Luther's explanation of the first and sixth commandments have no prohibitions whatsoever. He turns the first

<sup>32</sup>Tappert, 349.

<sup>33</sup>The problem is alluded to by Hans Schwarz, "The Means of Grace," *Christian Dogmatics* (2 vols.; ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 2:275.

commandment around so that the prohibition against idolatry becomes an invitation to faith. What was law is now gospel. About the sixth commandment Luther makes no mention of adultery, but says that spouses should honor and love one another.<sup>34</sup>

In my estimation Luther's positive intensification of the commandments is the work of theological genius. His explanation of the commandments are addressed to Christians, not non-Christians. They have nothing to say to civil law. Rather they are addressed to Christians as sinners and saints. Man as a sinner cannot escape the negative prohibitions of the law, but at the same time the Christian is addressed as a saint, taken back to that original paradise situation in which he loves God and his neighbor. The Christian, since he is in Christ and Christ in him, even before he becomes aware of the possibility of fulfilling the law, is actually fulfilling the law.

Has Luther manipulated the Ten Commandments beyond their recognition by following the negative prohibitions with positive suggestions? Here is the law in its pristine sense as positive requirement as it was known before the fall into sin. Here is the law as it was fulfilled in Christ. All of the positive descriptions of the law in the Christian's life are really only Christological statements, things which Jesus did and which reached their perfection in him. The fulfilled law is Christological, as its is the account of the life and death of Jesus. He loved God with his whole heart, he prayed to God, he heard the word of God and kept it, he honored his parents, he helped those in bodily distress, he lived a life of pure thoughts, he provided for those in financial distress, he spoke well of others, he had no evil desires.<sup>35</sup> Christ is the fulfillment of the law not only in the sense that all the Old Testament prophets spoke of him, but he is the positive affirmation of what God requires of us and what God is in himself. In Christ the tension of the law and the gospel is resolved.<sup>36</sup>

Luther's understanding of the commandments as positive Christological affirmations are similar to the parable of the Good Samaritan, though I could hardly demonstrate any influence this pericope was on the reformer's mind. The commandments are not really fulfilled by refraining from the prohibited evil, but helping the stricken traveler. Thus Christians should be embarrassed into making any unwarranted

<sup>34</sup>Tappert, 342–44.

<sup>35</sup>As mentioned above, Luther said that if man knew the first commandment, he would not need the others. For a discussion on the significance of Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, see *Luther's Catechisms—450 Years* ed. Robert D. Preus and David P. Scaer (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1979).

<sup>36</sup>I have discussed this matter at previous times. "Sanctification in Lutheran Theology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 49 (1984) 181–95; "Sanctification in the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 53 (1989) 165–81.

claim to moral perfection for themselves. They should be so engaged in positive good that they have no time to think about their personal morality or holiness.

How did Luther come to such a radical contradiction which required that the Christian think of himself as total sinner and as a person who accomplished only the good things which Christ did? He took the first commandment with its prohibition against idolatry and turned into an invitation to faith: "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." The first commandment is transformed into a statement of the gospel.<sup>37</sup> But the reformer was not playing fast and free with the commandments, as in Exodus the commandments really begin with a statement of redemption: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of bondage."

### 5. *The Law and the Gospel as a Hermeneutical Instrument.*

The law and the gospel cannot be looked upon as providing the hermeneutical key to every pericope in the Bible. Hermeneutics is too complicated a procedure to be resolved by a simple method. It can however tell the reader ahead of time what he should expect to hear about his condition before God.<sup>38</sup> If he does not find himself in the terrible dilemma of standing condemned and forgiven by God at the same time, he may conclude that he has misunderstood the Scriptures.<sup>39</sup> Luther in understanding Hebrews as providing no salvation for those who had fallen into sin rejected it from the canon. This was a radical decision on his part that might have been resolved by a reexamination of the pericope in question, but it does demonstrate the seriousness in which he understood the law and the gospel. The same is true of his rejection of the Epistle of James, which he understood as teaching works as a way of salvation.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup>"As I have often said, the trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true God." Luther's Explanation to the First Catechism (Large Catechism; [Tappert, 365]).

<sup>38</sup>Robert D. Preus, "Hermeneutics of the Formula of Concord," *No Other Gospel* (ed. Arnold J. Koepf; Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern, 1980), 330-32. The law and the gospel are "used to counter false and unevangelical practices which undermine the gospel, to combat rationalist or legalistic exegeses, and positively to offer a setting for the presentation of articles of faith."

<sup>39</sup>The Formula of Concord V claims that the law and gospel are to be used in understanding the Scriptures. "The distinction between law and Gospel is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be explained and understood correctly" (Tappert, 558).

<sup>40</sup>For a critical appraisal of Luther's view on James, see my *James the Apostle of Faith* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1983).



## 6. *The Law and the Gospel as a Homiletical Devise*

Law and gospel must also be understood as the basic homiletical device in the church.<sup>41</sup> The sermon must reflect the tension created by the God who condemns and redeems the Christian at the same time. The hearer must never be allowed to fall back on the laurels of his own morality or spiritual accomplishments. The listener is pummeled continuously by the law and the gospel. Testimonies of spiritual greatness must be replaced by the proclamation of God's fulfilling of his own law in Christ and the freedom which is now given the Christian in Christ. The law and the gospel should be seen as the key to man's existential self-dilemma in understanding himself and his relationship to God. If the universal atonement means anything, it means that God had satisfied all of the law's requirements, its demands and penalties, in the person of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The law no longer can describe how God views man. The gospel can never be nullified.<sup>42</sup> The gospel is never conditional, since incarnation and atonement are permanent realities with God. Our moral and spiritual failures do not trigger a negative response in God so that he returns to the old covenant.<sup>43</sup> The former agenda of penalty is not reinstated. This has been satisfied once and for all. For what reason is anyone now condemned, if the law is not in effect? A great condemnation awaits those who reject God's free gift in Christ. Under the covenant of

<sup>41</sup>The Formula of Concord V, "Law and Gospel," is set forth primarily as an article on the preaching of God's word (Tappert, 479-81).

<sup>42</sup>A document entitled, "The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do They Still Divide," was produced by Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians with the suggestion that the historical division of the Reformation period was no longer applicable. The theological faculty of the University of Goettingen responded negatively. A subsection of the opinion entitled "Justification," demonstrates how Lutheran theology is dependent on the law-gospel distinction, especially in its understanding of justification. See *The Lutheran Quarterly* 5 (Spring 1991) 1:15-30. The following is the classical Lutheran position. "Thereby his being justified, which he is in God's judgment, stands in contradiction to his experience of himself, according to which he can know himself only as sinner as long as he lives. He is always both at the same time: justified in his relationship to God and sinner according to his quality (*siml iustus et peccator*). In Christ the believer is separated from his sin, so that he can pray daily for forgiveness of persistent sins" (17).

<sup>43</sup>At the Midwestern Evangelical Theological Meeting at Grace Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, March 20-21, 1992, it became evident that the law-gospel distinction, in precisely this order was characteristic of Lutheran theology and not other traditions which either reverse the process or see a gospel-law-gospel distinction or which overlook the category. To show the importance of this category in Lutheran theology, the Formula of Concord V condemns any confusion on this article. "Hence we reject and deem it as false and detrimental when men teach that the Gospel, strictly speaking, is a proclamation of conviction and reproof and not exclusively a proclamation of grace. Thereby the Gospel is again changed into a teaching of the law, the merit of Christ and the Holy Scriptures are obscured, Christians are robbed of their true comfort, and the doors are again open to the papacy" (Tappert, 479).

the law, we failed to do what God required. Those who reject the gospel have not failed to fulfill a requirement, that would make the gospel only another law, they have rejected what God has freely done. Sinners are accepted by Christ. Those who reject him are not.

Two sayings are attributed to Luther. He promised a doctor's cap to any one who could rightly distinguish between the law and the gospel.<sup>44</sup> Even theologians who can dogmatically distinguish between them cannot preach it. The other has to do with good works. The Christian does not need the motivation of the law simply because he is so busy doing good works. Still the motivation of the law is there, but not law as demand, punishment, and reward, but law as fulfilled in Christ.<sup>45</sup> In spite of the terrible spiritual agony Luther experienced as long as he lived, he was not a dour, gloomy or sullen person, as some other reformers were reputed to be. Quite to the contrary he never overcame some of his crude peasant speech, which today would be looked upon by some as signs of an unsanctified life. When faced with his own greatness, he said that God brought about the Reformation while he and Melanchthon drank beer. He was annoyed with Melanchthon's obsession with minor sins and urged him to do something really sinful: "sin boldly." As a hymn writer, where the brine of the middle ages merged with the sweet waters of the Reformation, Luther was unmatched. He spoke about the Christian merrily going about his business and doing good. The law and the gospel is the secret to understanding Luther. No longer is my chief concern restraining from moral evil and then coming to the conclusion that I have lived a sanctified life and thus triumphed. Christians are never free from sin, but they are so busy doing good, that even when they fall into sin as they do good, this is all covered by grace.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup>"Now him who is adept at this art of properly dividing Law and Gospel set at the head of the table and declare him a Doctor of the Holy Scriptures." St. Louis Edition IX:802. Quoted from Pieper III, 242.

<sup>45</sup>Formula of Concord VI:5 (Tappert 564). See also Pieper, III, 237.

<sup>46</sup>For a discussion of just this point see my *James, the Apostle of Faith*, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1983) 66-9, esp. 67. "The Law has been fulfilled not through a divine sovereign act of arbitrary abrogations but by Christ's satisfying the divine requirements of the Law with its demands. Thus the Law is not presented to the Christian with its demands only, but also with the fulfillment of these demands. To the non-Christian the Law appears revealing the wrath of God because he has not yet recognized Christ as the Law's perfect answer." The reader may wish to consult my "Theses on Law and Gospel," *Springfielder* 37 (June 1973) 53-63.

## LAW AND GOSPEL IN REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

DONALD G. BLOESCH

### MEANING OF REFORMED

THE term “Reformed” has become almost as ambiguous as “evangelical,” but I am using it in a very specific sense. First it means anchored in the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. To be Reformed means to claim the legacy of Calvin, Zwingli, Knox, Bucer, and Bullinger. But Reformed people also acknowledge their indebtedness to Luther and Melancthon, both of whom spearheaded the Lutheran Reformation. It should be kept in mind that Calvin signed one of the editions of the Augsburg Confession. In the old Evangelical Synod of North America, the church of my childhood, the guiding standards of faith were the Augsburg Confession, Luther’s Small Catechism, and the Heidelberg Catechism. These remained confessional standards in the Evangelical and Reformed church, which came into existence in 1934 (now part of the United Church of Christ).

A second meaning of Reformed is the willingness always to be reformed in light of the Word of God. Our creeds and theologies remain under the witness of holy Scripture and therefore may be corrected and amended on the basis of new insight gleaned from the Word of God. New creeds can be written as new heresies arise to challenge the faith once delivered to the saints. Both Calvin and Luther placed the Word of God above the testimonies of sacred tradition.

Other theologians who have shaped the Reformed tradition and have influenced me personally in various ways are P. T. Forsyth, Charles Hodge, Karl Barth, Jacques Ellul, G. C. Berkouwer, Hendrikus Berkhof, and Reinhold Niebuhr. My principal mentors in this study are Barth, Calvin, and to a lesser extent Niebuhr.

### CONTRASTING POSITIONS

In Roman Catholicism the gospel is often pictured as a new law, one that fulfills the Mosaic law of Hebraic tradition. Christ is envisaged as the eternal or final law of God. The teachings of Christ as well

as the ministry and acts of Christ constitute the gospel as the fulfilled law of God.

In Luther an antithesis is frequently drawn between the law and the gospel. The law is the hammer of God's judgment, which brings about conviction of sin. The gospel is the balm of God's mercy that assures us of divine forgiveness. Luther like Calvin also affirmed a political use of the law—to restrain our rapacity and thereby preserve us from injury in the order of creation. While Luther's emphasis was on the spiritual use—to drive us to an awareness of our helplessness and need for God, it is debatable whether he held that the law always accuses. For the person with a stricken conscience, he says, "sin assuredly rules by the law, for no one loves the law by nature; and that is a great sin. Grace, however, makes the law dear to us, and then sin is no more there, and the law is no longer against us, but with us."<sup>1</sup>

For Calvin the principal use of the law is the ethical one—the law as a guide in the Christian life. He acknowledged that the law is also a tutor that leads one to Christ, but he was equally emphatic that the law is also a divinely-given standard that keeps us in conformity with the will of God as revealed in Christ. Calvin affirmed the basic continuity between law and gospel, though he did perceive the continuing tension between the letter of the law and the evangelical proclamation. According to him the law is always *with* the gospel rather than simply before the gospel. The right order is law-gospel-law. The law prepares us for faith in Christ, and the gospel then sends us back to the law enabling us to obey it in the spirit of love. Reinhold Niebuhr perceptively observes that, unlike Luther, Calvin does not "believe that grace abrogates the law, for he does not think of sanctification as an ecstatic experience of love which transcends all law. He thinks of it rather as a rigorous obedience to law."<sup>2</sup>

In contradistinction to the mainstream of Reformation tradition, Karl Barth gives priority to the gospel in the determination of the content of the law. If we are to understand the demand of the law rightly, we must first have been confronted by the promise of the gospel. Barth basically sees one use for the law—a spiritual-ethical use: the law directs us to the gospel and to service in the world in light of the gospel. Or to put it another way, the law leads us to faith in Christ and to obedience to Christ. The law thereby becomes a sign and witness of the gospel. The law is not the gospel, and the gospel is not the law, but the two are inseparable in constituting the one Word of God.

<sup>1</sup>Luther, *Preface to the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. C. M. Jacobs. In *Works of Martin Luther* II (Phil.: A. J. Holman Co., 1932) 457.

<sup>2</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* II (NY: Charles Scribners, 1951) 202.

Not surprisingly, natural law is suspect in Barthian circles, where natural awareness of moral law is deemed insufficient to provide us with valid knowledge of God's will and purpose for human life. This is because of human sin, which distorts our perceptions of moral order in the universe and subverts the moral sense that is a gift of creation. Jacques Ellul, however, who more or less follows Barthian theology, makes a place for the fact of natural law as opposed to a theology of natural law.<sup>3</sup> Despite human limitation and sin, all societies construct moral norms simply to preserve a semblance of justice and order. These moral norms attest the reality of a universal moral order, but they do not give a reliable account of this moral order. They nevertheless play a secondary role in preserving social order, and societies are judged by God on how they live up to their own standards.

#### DISTINCTIVE REFORMED EMPHASES

Reformed theology affirms a polarity but not an antithesis between law and gospel. It is commonly said that the second face of the gospel is the law, and the second face of the law is the gospel. The gospel is the form of the law, and the law is the form of the gospel (Barth). A believer is not released from the imperatives of the law but is now obliged and empowered to obey these imperatives. In Reformed thought the person of faith stands "under grace but also under judgment, under the promise but also under the demand, under the gospel but also under the law."<sup>4</sup> There is not a separation but a correlation between law and gospel. The antithesis is between the law of God as God intended and the human misunderstanding of the law, which is manifested in legalism and rigorism.

In Reformed theology the law is a means to salvation—but only when united with the gospel. Psalm 19:7–8 is often cited: "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. . . . The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes" (NIV). The law saves by directing us to the gospel, by relaying the message of the gospel to us. The law by itself does not save but only condemns. It is when Christ speaks to us through the law, it is when we perceive the law through the lens of the gospel, that we are convicted of sin and assured by the promise of the gospel.

Reformed theology takes strong exception to grounding ethics simply in the spirit of love. With the Reformed fathers "ethics was grounded not upon love but upon obeying the commandments as *God's* commandments. The Law keeps its place beside the Gospel as another, a second,

<sup>3</sup>See Jacques Ellul, *The Theological Foundation of Law*, trans. Marguerite Wieser (NY: Seabury, 1969).

<sup>4</sup>Karl Barth, *The Göttingen Dogmatics: Instruction in the Christian Religion I*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 195.

reality, equally true and commanding and necessary because the one God stands behind both, because the one Holy Spirit imparts both to men."<sup>5</sup>

Calvin was insistent that the gospel too is a sword that slays. The gospel brings judgment as well as grace because it introduces us to the majesty and holiness of God as well as to his infinite mercy. Indeed, God's mercy can only be understood and appreciated in light of his severity toward human sin.

In the mainstream of Reformed tradition there is one covenant—a covenant of grace, but it has two dimensions or stages, one of preparation, the other of fulfillment. The covenant that God makes with His people in the Old Testament is a preparation for the covenant He consummates in Christ. The Christian church is the new covenant form of the people of God. In Reformed history allusion was sometimes made to a covenant of works; this is best understood as the legalistic misunderstanding of the covenant of God's grace. The covenant that God made with both Abraham and Moses is based on His unconditional and unmerited love, but this covenant is not fulfilled until its beneficiaries, the people of God, walk according to the way of holiness.

Reformed theology is reluctant to suggest that the gospel abrogates the law. Romans 10:4 has often been a subject of controversy in the history of Christian thought: "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (NRSV). The word for end is *telos*, which generally signifies purpose or completion rather than termination. Yet in its immediate and wider context it can be seen as both termination and completion,<sup>6</sup> because Christ does bring an end to the law as an independent way to salvation. Christ is both the negation and fulfillment of the Mosaic law. Christ overthrows the law of sin and death in order to clear the way for the law of spirit and life (Rom 8:2).

The law is overturned by the gospel, and yet a new imperative standing in continuity with the original divine imperative proceeds from the gospel. Reinhold Niebuhr recognizes that "a higher than the traditional law is implied in the gospel."<sup>7</sup> Barth calls this the "law of grace" and the "law of freedom." It signifies the paradoxical unity of obligation and permission.

#### LOVE AND LAW

Reformed theology readily acknowledges an abiding tension between love as law and love as grace. Love is both an obligation and

<sup>5</sup>Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, trans. Douglas Horton (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978) 264.

<sup>6</sup>See James R. Edwards, *Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992) 247–50.

<sup>7</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, *op. cit.* 106.

a gift that transcends the sense of duty. When we are liberated by the grace that comes to us through both law and gospel, we are only too happy to obey the imperatives of the law. As the Psalmist exclaims, "I shall run the course made known in your commandments, for you set free my heart" (119:32 REB).

Reinhold Niebuhr, coopting a phrase from Nicolas Berdyaev, refers to the ethics of the gospel as "the morality beyond morality."<sup>8</sup> Yet even here, Niebuhr says, law is not completely transcended. When we are freed from legal demands, we nonetheless set out on a new course of obedience—no longer to legal claims but to a holy person.

This notion of the kingdom of God transcending the claims and codes of legal morality is also evident in Karl Barth: "The Kingdom of God has its beginning on the other side of the Cross, beyond all that is called 'religion' and 'life', beyond conservatism and radicalism, physics and metaphysics; on the other side of morals and of that which is beyond morality."<sup>9</sup>

What I am proposing is an ethics of divine command, but this is the divine command in unity with the divine promise. Love goes beyond the prescriptions of law, but at the same time love fulfills the imperative of law (cf. Matt 5:17; Rom 13:10). Love liberates us from the burden of the law and empowers us to keep the law.

To reduce the Christian life to agape love (as Nygren does), is to disregard the claims of God's law upon the believing community. God is both love and holiness, and his law proceeds from both. Agape does not cancel the claims of *nomos*, but it places *nomos* on a new foundation. Agape is not simply sacrificial love but also holy love. Love leads us to respect the holy law of God as deserving of our fidelity and adherence. But now under grace we adhere not to make ourselves acceptable before God but to show our gratefulness for what God has already done for us in Jesus Christ.

An ethics of the divine command is at the same time an ethics of grace. When we strive to obey the law of God we are making a witness to the gospel fact that salvation comes by grace and grace alone. We are justified and also sanctified only by grace because our works are invariably mixed with motives that are less than pure. Even as Christians we sin in our morality as well as in our immorality. But we can proceed to do good works because, although inevitably falling short of God's glory, they are covered by the perfect righteousness of Christ and thus rendered pleasing in God's sight.

<sup>8</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953) 164.

<sup>9</sup>Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (NY: Oxford University Press, 1968) 159.

As Christians we are still under the command of God, but this command must now be seen as a permission as well. This paradoxical fact is attested in Matt 14:28–29. Peter asks to be commanded to come to Jesus in the water, and Jesus says “Come.” The command of our Lord fulfills the innermost yearnings of our being and sets our will free to act according to both God’s perfect will and our deepest existential need.

#### CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

Reformed theology has always endeavored to tie the gift of God’s unfathomable grace with the call to discipleship under the cross. If grace is not united with discipleship it becomes cheap. Just as grace cost God the life of his own Son, so it must also cost us our lives—our reputations, our self-esteem, sometimes even our health—in the service of the gospel.

The gospel is an evangelical indicative, but an indicative that implies an imperative. This inseparability is seen in Mark 2:1–12 where Jesus heals the paralytic: “Your sins are forgiven” and “Stand up and take your mat and walk” (NRSV). Which is law and which is gospel? They both announce the good news, but a command is also involved.

As Christians we are enjoined to be rich in good works (I Tim 6:17–19), but our motivation is not to make ourselves acceptable before God or to earn the favor of God. The Heidelberg Catechism rightly reminds us that our commitment to a life of service is to be based on gratitude for what God has already done for us in Jesus Christ. And there are other biblical motivations for following Christ: the fear of God, the love of God, and the desire to glorify God. Paul confessed that it is “the love of Christ” that “urges us on” (2 Cor 5:14 NRSV).

In delineating the rationale for the Christian life we should heed seriously the biblical dictum that being is prior to action. We must be in Christ before we can act in harmony with his will. This truth is underlined by Paul: “We have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him” (Col 1:9, 10 NRSV). Jesus makes this same point when he contends that good fruit can only come from a good tree (Luke 6:43–45). Once we are converted into salt and light by God’s grace we must sprinkle our salt and let our light shine before others so that they may see our good works and give glory to our Father in heaven (Matt 5:14, 16 NRSV).

Reformed theology emphasizes the need not only for faith but also for obedience. Faith does not simply produce obedience but encompasses obedience. Barth makes this very clear: “There has to be a rec-



ognition, an acceptance, an acknowledgment, a respecting, a bowing down. This is why there has to be knowledge and action, not just sinking and vanishing, not just stillness and passivity, not just a 'feeling of absolute dependence.'"<sup>10</sup>

To preach grace without sounding the call to holiness is to settle for a truncated gospel. The whole counsel of God embraces both the divine promise of unmerited grace and the divine mandate to live out a vocation to service and holiness. We preach the gospel to comfort the afflicted and the law to afflict the comfortable (Luther). But we also preach both law and gospel to challenge the forgiven sinner to lead a life that redounds to the glory of God.

#### THE ULTIMATE CRITERION

The ultimate criterion for Christian faith is the gospel-law or the law-gospel. I affirm the chronological priority of the law of God on the plane of history (cf. John 1:17) but the ontological priority of the gospel (cf. John 1:3–5, 9). God's grace precedes God's commandment and also empowers us to fulfill what is commanded. Augustine put this very tersely: "Give what you command, and command what you will."

The gospel-law is the divine commandment in its unity with the divine promise. It is not a universal principle nor a narrative but an event. It is a word of personal address that comes to us through the witness of Scripture and church tradition.

I uphold a divine command ethic over the justice-love ethic<sup>11</sup> now being promulgated in mainline churches. The latter confounds the rational search for justice with the concrete will of the almighty God. It denies the disjunction between human justice and agape—the sacrificial, paradoxical love of the cross. It also ignores the infinite qualitative distinction between human virtue and divine holiness.

There is no law of creation proceeding to the gospel of redemption (as Braaten, Tillich, Pannenberg claim), but there is a law of creation illumined by the gospel of redemption. The universal moral law does not furnish a point of contact with the gospel of free grace, but this gospel opens our eyes to the reality of a moral order imbedded in the cosmos.

I affirm one covenant of grace that unites both Old and New Testaments, prophetic and apostolic history. The grace of God revealed in Christ is a new form of the old covenant made with Abraham and then with Moses. Some Reformed theologians of the past have even recognized a covenant of grace before history, an "eternal pact between the

<sup>10</sup>*Göttingen Dogmatics*, 180.

<sup>11</sup>See *Presbyterians and Human Sexuality 1991* (Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.], 1991).

Father and the Son whereby the Father commissioned the Son to be the Savior and gave him a people."<sup>12</sup>

I acknowledge that there are dangers in the gospel-law order as well as in the law-gospel order. The law must not be reduced simply to a dimension of the gospel. Nor does the law by itself prepare the way for the reception of the gospel. Even Karl Barth, who is convinced of the inseparability of law and gospel, nevertheless insists that there is an infinite distance between them.<sup>13</sup> The law is a tutor that leads us to the gospel but only because grace infuses the law and illumines it. The law is not an independent propaedeutic to the gospel; yet as the righteous hand of God it leads us to the gospel but only in the power of the grace that comes from the gospel.

Again, I wish to affirm the priority of grace over works, the divine promise over the divine command, the truth of the gospel over the prescriptions of the law. The Decalogue itself begins with the announcement of grace: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me" (Exod 20:2–3 NRSV). The command follows the declaration of God's mercy.

The commandments in the Bible, particularly the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount, should be regarded as road signs that set us on the straight and narrow way. But we should remember that it is only Christ who gives us the power and vision to walk according to the road signs. It is only in the light of Christ that we are enabled to appreciate the full meaning of the road signs, particularly as they bear on our lives in the here and now.

The implications of the gospel-law order are many. Apologetics is not to precede dogmatics but is to be fully incorporated in the dogmatic task. Faith does not stand alone but produces a life of obedience. Repentance is not prior to faith as its logical ground but flows out from faith. In our preaching we do not first try to drive people into a consciousness of sin through the use of the law, but we call people to repentance on the basis of both law and gospel. In pastoral care self-knowledge does not come before God-knowledge, but we know ourselves only in the light of God's incomparable mercy revealed in the cross of Christ. The meaning of the cross precedes and undergirds the examination of the self. The assurance of pardon comes before as well as after the confession of sins.

I think the most comprehensive order, the one that does most justice to the entire biblical witness, is gospel-law-gospel. We are awak-

<sup>12</sup>See M. Eugene Osterhaven, "Covenant" in *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, Donald K. McKim, ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), [pp. 84–87] 85.

<sup>13</sup>Karl Barth, *Community, State and Church* (NY: Doubleday, 1960) 81.

ened to the seriousness of the law and the gravity of our sins when we hear the gospel of free grace through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. The gospel then directs us to the law as a guide for the Christian life. But in reminding us of our sin the law sends us back to the gospel for the grace and consolation it provides. The divine promise precedes the commandment, but the commandment in turn precedes the fulfillment of the promise.



## LAW AND GOSPEL IN THE ANABAPTIST/BAPTIST TRADITION

W. R. ESTEP

### INTRODUCTION

THERE are two problems with this topic which must be admitted at the outset. The terms “Law” and “Gospel” do not occur frequently in either Anabaptist works that could be properly termed theological or in Anabaptist confessions of faith. This is also true of Baptist confessions in general and of major theologians among the Baptists in particular.

The second problem relates to the use of the terms Anabaptist and Baptist. While there is an historical connection between Anabaptists at the sixteenth century and the emerging Baptist movement in the seventeenth century, one should not confuse the two movements or fail to distinguish between the two. Even though the relationship is still a matter of debate among church historians, it is generally conceded that the Anabaptists first arose within the context of the Swiss Reformation in the sixteenth century, whereas, the Baptists arose out of the English Puritan-Separatist movements in contact with and under the influence of the Dutch Mennonites.

In spite of these distinctions, it must also be admitted that the Anabaptists and early English Baptists shared a similar theological, ecclesiological, and ethical stance, so much so that the topic can be treated without doing a disservice to scholarship or the differing traditions of Anabaptist and Baptist life. Therefore, we will frequently use the terms “Law” and “Gospel” as apparently both Anabaptists and Baptists used them in a general sense and more narrowly in a particular sense, especially in relationship to the accusatory or revelatory function of the Law.

Emil Brunner in *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption and Revelation and Reason* delineates seven uses of the concept of Law in the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> Of these, the Anabaptist and Baptist usages

<sup>1</sup>Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, 214–30, and *Revelation and Reason*, 332. Cited by James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) 500–501.

refer most frequently to the Mosaic Law and less so to the Moral Law. With the Anabaptists, particularly, the term "Law" is frequently subsumed under the Old Testament or the Old Covenant.

In an attempt to seek an understanding of both variations and the commonality of these concepts in Anabaptist/Baptist traditions, we will first look at four representative Anabaptist theologians. Second, we will turn our attention to the use of the concepts Law and Gospel as reflected in major Baptist confessions, and third, as understood by some twentieth century Baptist theologians.

#### REPRESENTATIVE ANABAPTISTS

##### *Balthasar Hubmaier*

Balthasar Hubmaier became the first writing theologian among the Anabaptists. He was educated first in the cathedral school at Augsburg and later received the Bachelor of Arts degree after only one year's study in the university, and his *bacca laureus biblicus* from the University of Freiburg in Breisgau, where he also became the successor of Johannes Eck as rector of the *Pfauenburse*. In October, 1512, he joined Eck at the University of Ingolstadt where he received his doctorate in theology. He eventually became the vice-rector of the university, which position he vacated to become the cathedral preacher at the Cathedral of Regensburg. From Regensburg he went to Waldshut where he became the head priest in a small chapter consisting of ten priests. It was here that he had time to read the Scriptures carefully for the first time. In addition to Latin, he had acquired a knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew. Apparently in 1522, he committed his life to Christ, for he wrote some friends at Regensburg:

Within two years has Christ for the first time come into my heart to thrive. I have never dared to preach him so boldly as now, by the grace of God. I lament before God that I so long lay ill of this sickness. I pray him truly for pardon; I did this unwittingly, wherefore I write this. I wonder if your preachers now will say, I am now of another disposition than formerly, that I confess and condemn all doctrine and preaching, such as were mine among you and elsewhere, that is not grounded in the divine word.<sup>2</sup>

He attended the second major disputation in Zürich in October, 1523, and later recalled having talked with Zwingli about believers' baptism at that time. By April, 1525, he was baptized by William Reublin, and a week later, Hubmaier baptized most of the members of

<sup>2</sup>Cited in Henry C. Vedder, *Balthasar Hübmaier: The Leader of the Anabaptists* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905) 78.

his church. However, before the end of the year, he and his wife were driven from Waldshut by the invading forces of Austria. After being imprisoned and tortured in Zürich, he left Switzerland for Moravia. Here his ministry was blessed by thousands of baptisms but the notoriety gained spelled his doom at the hands of Archduke Ferdinand. After imprisonment and torture in the Kreuzenstein Castle, he was burned to death as a heretic in Vienna on 10 March 1528. However, from 1524 to 1528, he was able to write at least nineteen pamphlets and booklets on various topics. In his work *On the Christian Baptism of Believers*, he briefly discusses the contrast between the Law and the Gospel. In reference to John's ministry he wrote,

So it is with Christ. He has to speak to us, or his messengers in his place; then we are made whole in our souls. Believed forgiveness of sins is the true gospel which cannot be without the Spirit of God, for the Spirit of God makes the Word alive. Faith is a work of God, John 6:29. For by faith the law of sin and of death becomes a law of the Spirit, Romans 8:2. For what was impossible to the law, God has fulfilled through Jesus Christ so that the righteousness demanded by the law might be fulfilled in us who now walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

In this quotation, it is interesting to note that the revelatory nature of the "law of sin and death becomes a law of the Spirit." Romans 8:2 is cited. "For what was impossible to the law," Hubmaier says, "God has fulfilled through Jesus Christ," which apparently means that the word of promise in the law has been honored in Christ. Although God has fulfilled the Law through Jesus Christ, this does not, in Hubmaier's opinion, release the Christian to live a wanton life of sin, but, instead, makes possible a righteousness that the Law demands. Or, as Hubmaier says, "might be fulfilled in us who now walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Therefore, intrinsic in Hubmaier's understanding of the Law is discipleship.

### *Hans Denck*

Hans Denck was one of the most gifted of the early Anabaptist theologians. At the same time he was perhaps the most controversial. He graduated from the University of Ingolstadt in 1519 and soon proved himself an able linguist, proficient in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. For a time he taught in St. Sebald's School in Nuremberg from which he was banished due to his heretical opinions on baptism and the Lord's

<sup>3</sup>Balthasar Hubmaier, *On the Christian Baptism of Believers*, in Balthasar Hubmaier: *Theologian of Anabaptism*, trans. and ed. H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1989) 106.

Supper, as well as a number of other topics. In 1526 he was apparently baptized in Augsburg by Hubmaier who was en route from Zürich to Moravia. His personal acquaintance with Hubmaier probably dated from student days at Ingolstadt or later when Hubmaier returned to Regensburg in 1522, Denck could hardly have avoided hearing him preach from the Gospel of Luke in the Chapel of the Beautiful Maria.

Denck's theological development, although apparently influenced by Hubmaier, was uniquely his own. He had a deep appreciation for the Old Testament and, therefore, he and Ludwig Haetzer made the first translation of the Hebrew prophets into German at Worms in the summer of 1527. In spite of Osiander's attempt to suppress it, the original edition was reprinted ten times and was used by both Zwingli (1529) and Luther (1532).<sup>4</sup> Denck also attempted to witness to the various Jewish communities in the Rhine River valley. His knowledge of the *Torah* and the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, coupled with his understanding of Christianity as primarily discipleship (*Nachfolge Christi*) led him to address what he considered a Lutheran misconception of the Law in the only major Anabaptist work on the subject. In response to Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio*, Denck wrote his *Vom Gesetz Gottes* with the subtitle *How the Law is Made Void and Yet Must be Brought to Fulfillment*. Doubtless Denck's own experience with the Lutheran establishment in Nuremberg and his observations regarding the failure of the Lutheran movement to produce a transformation of life in its followers, motivated him to deal with the subject in the light of his own understanding of the Law, discipleship, and spirituality.

Denck says in *Concerning the Law of God (Vom Gesetz Gottes)* that he has been compelled to write this treatise because of "half-truths" that some had been led to accept for one reason or another.<sup>5</sup> He charges that the whole world confesses Christ with their lips but deny him with their lives. This, he claims, is based upon the notion that Christ has fulfilled the Law and therefore the Christian is delivered from it. However, he quotes Matthew 5:17 to support his position that even though Christ has fulfilled the Law, this does not mean that Christians are under no obligation to live exemplary lives just as Christ himself lived. That this is needed can be seen, Denck says, because "the whole world is full of such people whose fruit and life were better

<sup>4</sup>Clarence Bauman, *The Spiritual Legacy of Hans Denck: Interpretation and Translation of Key Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991) 16. See also Georg Baring, *Hans Denck Schriften, Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer VI* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1955) 33, 34.

<sup>5</sup>The "half-truth" that both Hubmaier and Denck criticized severely was the idea of cheap "believism" that envisioned that faith (*assensus*) alone was sufficient in the Christian life while ignoring the demands of discipleship, which is the evidence of the new birth that comes about as a result of a faith commitment to Christ as Lord.



before they boasted of faith than thereafter.”<sup>6</sup> He puts much emphasis upon the dynamics of the new birth, for, Denck points out, the new man in Christ Jesus is under the compulsion of love to live the Christian life.

No one can satisfy the Law who does not truly know and love Christ. Whoever fulfills the Law through him has merit but not credit before God, for all honor belongs to God through whose grace a way is given which [previously] was impossible for the whole world. Therefore, merit does not belong to man but to Christ, through whom everything one has is given by God. But, whoever seeks glory in His merit as if it were his own doing, surely destroys grace through Christ. Whoever says one need not keep the law makes a liar of God, who gave it in order that one should keep it, as all Scriptures testifies.<sup>7</sup>

Denck claims that this rather paradoxical idea of the Christian who is still under the Law while Christ has satisfied its requirements and, therefore, fulfilled the Law, is explained by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life.

Whoever has received the new covenant of God, that is, in whose heart the Law was written through the Holy Spirit, is truly righteous. Whoever supposes he will accomplish keeping the Law through the book, ascribes to the dead letter what belongs to living Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

In Denck's theology Law and Gospel are both expressions of the grace of God. Just as one proclaims God's wrath he also must proclaim his grace. Denck divides Law into three divisions: commandments, customs, and rights. Commandments are those that flow solely from the love of God and neighbor. Customs are social ordinances which include ceremonies or signs but when without meaning, they simply become a mockery. Rights are civil (legal) laws. One fulfills all three aspects of the Law through love.

But the one who acts contrary to love can excuse himself neither with divine nor human law, for all laws should give way to love since they are for the sake of love and not love for their sake. They are unable to produce love, so they also should not hinder it. Love produces all laws, therefore it can withdraw them all again, each according to its juncture.<sup>9</sup>

Denck writes in one of his more paradoxical statements, “All commandments, customs, and rights, insofar as they are scripturally compiled in

<sup>6</sup>Hans Denck, *Concerning the Law of God*, in *The Spiritual Legacy of Hans Denck*, trans. Clarence Bauman, 131.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 141, 143.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 155.

the Old and New Testaments, are annulled for the true disciple of Christ, that is, he has inscribed in his heart one word, namely, that he loves God alone."<sup>10</sup> Denck concludes his treatise with these words that approximate Paul's dictum that love is the fulfilling of the Law. "Whoever is born of God will bear witness to the truth. Whoever rejects it will also be rejected by God. Cursed be the one who does not truly love God and does not keep his commandments."<sup>11</sup>

The antinomianism that Denck saw in Luther's teachings and in what he considered the unreformed lives of Luther's followers, he declared was a perversion of the Gospel due to a misunderstanding of Christ's fulfillment of the requirements of the Law. Bauman summarizes Denck's position when he writes: "Denck holds that the letter of the Law is transcended in that its intention is internalized and becomes the rule of Christ within through the power of the Spirit."<sup>12</sup> And that rule of Christ, I would add, is *agape*.

### *Pilgram Marpeck*

Pilgram Marpeck, an almost forgotten Anabaptist theologian, has been the subject of a number of recent studies. John Kiwiet has written that Marpeck was the only theologian to give Anabaptism a thoroughgoing, systematic theology. Marpeck was not formally trained in theology but had a good education and apparently a knowledge of Latin. However, his voluminous theological works were written in German.

Marpeck was born at Rattenberg on the Inn River in the Tirol of Austria. He apparently was from a wealthy and outstanding family in the area. On February 26, 1520, he and his wife joined a guild of mining workers of Rattenberg. Three years later he was a member of the Lower Council and two years afterwards became a member of the Upper Council. This was the same year in which he was appointed a mining magistrate, whose function was to supervise the mining of silver in the area. He apparently was first attracted to the Reformation through the work of Luther, but along with others in the Inn Valley, he was subsequently drawn to the Anabaptist movement. Leonhard Schiemer, an Anabaptist evangelist, arrived in Rattenberg on November 25, 1527 and a day after his arrival was arrested and later beheaded on January 14, 1528. Two weeks later, Marpeck resigned his position as mining magistrate.<sup>13</sup> Marpeck's resignation was doubtless due to his

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 153.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>12</sup>Clarence Bauman, *The Spiritual Legacy of Hans Denck*, 12.

<sup>13</sup>William Klassen and Walter Klaassen, *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, Classics of the Radical Reformation series (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1978) 18. Two different dates are given for Schiemer's death. Page 18 gives it as January 14 and page 20 indicates it was on January 15.

Anabaptist convictions. He had been instructed to apprehend Anabaptists and turn them over to the civil authorities for trial and punishment. This he refused to do. If he had not been such a prominent man he doubtless would have been executed along with many other martyrs in the Inn Valley. As it was, his property was confiscated and the orphan children, that he and his wife had adopted, were taken from him and he became, "a wandering pilgrim under the heavens." He left his native Austria for Strasbourg, a city known for its tolerance of divergent religious views. Here he was employed as a city engineer in the course of which he built a water system for the city and wood-floating flumes in the surrounding valleys which enabled Strasbourg to reap a harvest of wood from the forests along the Kinzig River.<sup>14</sup>

In Strasbourg he soon became the leader among the Anabaptists of the city and entered into a running debate with Caspar Schwenckfeld. By 1532 he had become so prominent that Bucer and Capito felt his influence was a threat to the religious monopoly of the city. This led to Marpeck's imprisonment and subsequent prison manuscript, his confession of faith. In this confession he set forth in twenty-nine articles his understanding of the Anabaptist faith in the light of the hermeneutics which he developed in an attempt to understand the relationships of the Old and New Testaments. During the next several years he wrote very little, aside from letters, but apparently was not inactive in sharing his faith with others in Switzerland, Moravia, and elsewhere. From 1545 to 1556, he was employed by the City of Augsburg, where he did for the city what he had done for Strasbourg. He died in 1556 of natural causes.

Whether Marpeck was familiar with the Latin language, as Harold Bender held, or whether he only used some Latin phrases in his works as Klassen and Klaassen suppose, there is no doubt that he was an unusually gifted layman and an able theologian in his own right. This is certainly evident in his biblical hermeneutics in which he treats the relationship of the Law and Gospel.

Law and Gospel are discussed within the context of the dichotomy that Marpeck draws between the Old and New Testaments. This, too, is derived from his understanding of the covenants. He holds that God seeks to impart his revelation to man in terms of covenants. The first was the covenant with Adam, the second with Noah, and the third with Abraham. The first with Adam gave what he calls a *schema aller späteren Bundesverhältnisse* (a plan of all later covenant conditions).<sup>15</sup> After the Abrahamic covenant, which was marked by the sign of circumcision, there came the Mosaic law. After Moses, still another covenant was

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>15</sup>Jan J. Kiwiet, *Pilgram Marbeck: Ein Führer in der Täuferbewegung der Reformationszeit* (Kassel: J. G. Oncken Verlag, 1957) 93.

made with David, in which is found the promise of the coming of the Son of God.<sup>16</sup>

The advent of Christ ushered in the New Covenant or New Testament. Marpeck holds that there is an *absolute difference* between the Old and the New Testaments. The Old is *äußerlich* (outer) and the New is *innerlich* (inner). He explains the covenant with Adam demanded an external obedience but the New Testament requires an inner obedience which is spiritual. He points out, "*in Christus haben die Kinder Gottes schon die geistliche Auferstehung, auf die die leibliche Auferstehung später folgen wird.*"<sup>17</sup> He sees this new spiritual life as a fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, where God has promised to write an inner covenant with his people on their hearts. Another contrasting pair of terms in the Old Testament is *zeitlich* (temporal) and the New Covenant is *ewig* (eternal). He explains that the eternal life which belonged to Adam and Eve before the fall was lost but through the resurrection, Christ has brought it back again. While the Old Testament carried with it the necessity of faith and hope, this faith was that of the natural man, that is, unregenerate man. It surely was not a true spiritual faith which comes only through "*die Wiedergeburt vom Heiligen Geist.*"<sup>18</sup> Again, the contrasting terms are *Figur* (type) and *Wesen* (essence). He finds Christ, the church, and the Kingdom of God all prefigured in the Old Testament.<sup>19</sup>

The fourth contrast is that of *Knechtschaft* (slavery) and *Kindschaft* (sonship). In the fifth place, the contrast is drawn between sin and forgiveness, death and deliverance. In the discussion of sins and forgiveness, Marpeck introduces his understanding of the role of the Law which brings the knowledge of sin. He says the Law, the ten commandments, the ceremonial commandments, priestly service, and the system of sacrifices, were all necessary because of sin. Sin was a reality from the time of Adam, but when the Law came, the knowledge of sin became a reality. For Moses, mankind had a natural knowledge of good and evil, which is even true today. Through the Law came the consciousness of the nature of sin as transgression against God. This is the beginning of repentance for sin is in one's own heart. Sin and death reigned after Moses until Christ. With the *Bundesvolkes* (the people's covenant) the time of forgiveness and deliverance has come. Marpeck in the sixth place, speaks of the law as a time of *Unwissenheit* (hiddenness) as over against *Offenbarung* (revelation) of God in Christ which made possible a knowledge of God in his eternal essence. This personal knowledge of

<sup>16</sup>"Schließlich wurde noch ein Bund mit David errichtet mit der Verheißung des kommenden Gottessohnes." Cited in Kiwiet, *Pilgram Marpeck*, 93.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>19</sup>"Auch das Volk Israel war ein Bild des neuen Gottesvolkes." *Ibid.*, 97.

God is the acceptance by faith of the love of God revealed and offered to us in Christ. This is the knowledge that leads to eternal life.<sup>20</sup>

In using the term "Law," Marpeck frequently means the Old Testament itself, which is never more than promise which finds its fulfillment only in the New Testament. The Old Testament is yesterday and the New, today. The Old Testament is prologue (*vorbeigegangen*); the New is that which has come. "Therefore, the right order of teaching is that God has allowed the Law to precede Christ in order to show clearly the nature of sin and its fruits."<sup>21</sup>

The primary function of the Mosaic Law was condemnatory, to intensify a consciousness of sin against God. Marpeck also held that the Law not only revealed sin and recalled sin to memory, but provoked sin, and therefore increased the knowledge of sin. This, of course, is the action of a gracious God. Hence, the Law should be understood as the "first grace."<sup>22</sup> Like Luther, Marpeck held that the Law must first bring conviction for sin before the Gospel can bring its forgiveness and healing.<sup>23</sup> Before the coming of Christ, Marpeck held, man could not experience full forgiveness of sins. He could only be comforted by using the ceremonies that God had ordained for that purpose in the Old Covenant.

In summary, Marpeck held the Law was necessary to bring a consciousness of sin as transgression against God. But the Law was not salvific. However, it did serve the purpose of pointing mankind to Christ. The final covenant of God with his people, was a covenant sealed with the blood of the incarnate Christ, who alone is the full and final revelation of God. In Marpeck we see covenants in ascending circles, from Adam to Christ. This is in a sense a progressive, holy history of God's dealings with mankind, of which the Law was an integral part, and necessary to bring an acute awareness of the nature and depth of man's sin. It was not simply sin in the abstract or an inherited sinful nature, the sin uncovered by the Law *as sin against God*. For this, there is only one hope, and that is Jesus Christ, "the living power of God," who fulfilled the Law and made possible the new birth.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 101.

<sup>21</sup>Klassen and Klaassen, *Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, 123.

<sup>22</sup>The first grace, which is the Old Testament, has brought knowledge of sin; that is, the law was given through Moses, grace and truth through Christ. The first grace of the Old Testament, through which man received only knowledge of sin, also comes through Christ. And this first grace, as has been shown, was promised to Adam and Eve. Thus, from His fullness, we have all received grace and more grace, which is also a complete comfort to the godliness of faith, namely, the remission and forgiveness of sin. (Klassen and Klaassen, *Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, 123.)

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>24</sup>For those who have been baptized by Christ with fire and Spirit know Christ and His people differently from the others. They know, to begin with, that Christ is the living

In the abstract of the Confession of 1532, Marpeck links the Law and the Gospel very closely in articles 14 and 15.

14. The Law demands circumcision for the one who believes it is a commandment and Law of God. God has implanted in them the knowledge of sin, death, and hell along with the hope to be saved from it. The patriarchs received this spirit of servitude from God.
15. The Gospel of Christ, even Christ himself, the Messiah, for whom the ancients hoped, and awaited with long-suffering, brings with it, for the one who believes and is baptized, salvation, indulgence, and forgiveness of sin and takes away all fear and imprisonment to sin, death, and hell. And it awakens, comforts and strengthens the broken hearted, giving them strength and power to do the will of God.<sup>25</sup>

### *Menno Simons*

Menno Simons, like Hubmaier, was a priest before becoming an Anabaptist. He apparently received his theological education in one of the local monasteries. For some nine months he wrestled with the problems that his conversion presented as he attempted to continue his responsibilities as one of the priests serving the church in Witmarsun. Finally, after prayer and increasing conviction that he could no longer continue living a lie, he became an Anabaptist sometime in the year 1536. For twenty-five years, although harassed and hounded as a fugitive from justice, he died of natural causes. His influence was so great that not long after his conversion and call into the ministry, he became the undisputed leader among the Dutch Anabaptists, they became known as Menists, or Menno's people. His numerous works were widely distributed. In his *Reply to Gellius Faber, 1554*, he addresses the role of the Law in one of the few places in his writings in which the subject is discussed. Faber, a Reformed minister, had admonished his people to be "well grounded in the Law and principally in the Holy Gospel." In response to this admonition, Menno writes,

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power of God, and the end of the law, for the sanctification of everyone that believes. They have the forgiveness of past sins, a certain comfort, security and rest through faith in Christ. Those who are thus baptized must be persons who have recognized their sin and inability in the law, just as the ancients and those who knew the law, as I have explained earlier, knew that the law is given for those who can know and not for those who cannot (such as children or idiots, for whom there is no law either with man or God). For people who have thus been shattered, beaten, and broken by the law, Christ is the Physician and Savior. All who know and recognize their sin can only then receive comfort and security. To this part of man's recognition and faith belongs the baptism of the apostolic church, and not to young children or the ignorant, who have no law or knowledge of sin even though they are under law and sin (*ibid.*, 127).

<sup>25</sup>"Pilgram Marpeck's Confession of Faith" in *Anabaptist Beginnings (1523–1533): A Sourcebook*, ed. William R. Estep (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1976) 166–67.

This is the real function and end of law: to reveal unto us the will of God, to discover sin unto us, to threaten with the wrath and the punishment of the Lord, to announce death and to point us from it to Christ, so that we, crushed in Spirit, may before the eyes of God die unto sin, and seek and find the only and eternal medicine and remedy for our souls, Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup>

Clearly in Anabaptist fashion, Menno's emphasis was not upon the Law, but upon the Gospel. He follows his treatment regarding the function of the Law with one on the Gospel,

So also where the Gospel is preached in true zeal, according to the pleasure of God, and unblamably in the power of the Spirit, so that it penetrates the hearts of the hearers, there we find a converted, changed, and new mind, which joyfully and gratefully gives praises to its God for His inexpressibly great love toward us miserable sinners, in Christ Jesus, and thus it enters into newness of life willingly and voluntarily, by the power of a true faith and a new birth.<sup>27</sup>

In the next paragraph, it is clear that Menno's interest is in living the Christian life as a true disciple of Christ, which he calls, "entering into newness of life," with its implication of true repentance means that there is a new Law of Christian conduct that characterizes those who are born again.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, Menno is not interested in the traditional juxtaposition of Law and Gospel or in making complicated what to him was transparently simple, the new life in Christ which is born of the Spirit.

### *Summary of the Anabaptist Position on Law and Gospel*

Of the Anabaptists, Marpeck is closer to Luther's position although he extends the dichotomy between Law and Gospel to the "*absolute Unterschied*" between the Old and New Testaments. Hubmaier and Menno give very little attention to Law and Gospel as a paradigm or organizing principle of theology. It is Denck whose major concern is to combat what he considered a half truth which would lead to antinomianism. However his final emphasis is upon the law written by the Holy Spirit on the heart of those which expresses itself in the higher law of love.

#### ENGLISH BAPTIST CONFESSIONS

### *General Baptists*

The first English Baptists arose in contact with the Dutch Anabaptists who became known as Mennonites. An early schism occurred in

<sup>26</sup>Menno Simons, *Reply to Gellius Faber*, in *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons: c. 1496–1561*, ed. John Christian Wenger (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1956) 718.

<sup>27</sup>Wenger, *Menno Simons*, 718.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

the "Ancient Church" of Francis Johnson (c. 1595) before he was able to join his congregation in Amsterdam which left England before him. However, there are no confessional statements from this group. The second group of English Separatists to become "Anabaptists" was that led by John Smyth from Gainsborough. After arriving in Amsterdam these new refugees adopted believers' baptism and a year or so later sought to unite with the Waterlander Mennonite Church. In the forefront of this development was John Smyth, an M.A. graduate of Cambridge University and an ordained minister of the Church of England. By 1606, he led in the formation of a Separatist congregation in Gainsborough with a branch at Scrooby of which John Robinson became the pastor. Once in Amsterdam the Smyth-led church underwent some radical changes. Rejecting the covenant upon which basis the church was formed in Gainsborough, the church was reorganized upon the basis of that which they perceived to be the New Testament model of which baptism, upon personal confession of faith in Christ, became the initiatory act. Subsequently, when Smyth sought union with the Waterlander Mennonites, the church drew up its first confession of faith. However this proved unacceptable to the Mennonites, even though it indicates that already Smyth and his congregation had rejected the Calvinism that had characterized their Puritan-Separatist congregation before arriving in the Netherlands.

A second confession of faith was then drawn up apparently in conference with Hans De Ries, a Mennonite pastor who like Smyth practiced medicine. This confession was largely an abbreviated form of the Waterlander Confession of 1580, but without the numerous Scriptural references of the earlier confession. As in the Waterlander Confession, the Old and New Testaments are juxtaposed. In referring to Christ and the Law, Article 10 declares:

In him is fulfilled, and by him is taken away, an intolerable burden of the law of Moses, even all the shadows and figures; as, namely, the priesthood, temple, altar, sacrifice; also the kingly office, kingdom, sword, revenge appointed by the law, battle and whatsoever was a figure of his person or office, so thereof a shadow or representation.<sup>29</sup>

The eleventh article continues in much the same vein:

And as the true promised Prophet he hath manifested and revealed unto us whatsoever God asketh or requireth of the people of the New Testament; for as God, by Moses and the other prophets, hath spoken and declared his will to the people of the Old Testament; so hath he in those last days, by his Prophet spoken unto us, and revealed unto us the

<sup>29</sup>John Smyth, *Short Confessions of Faith in XX Articles by John Smyth*, in *Baptist Confessions of Faith* by William L. Lumpkin (Chicago: The Judson Press, 1959) 105.



mystery (concealed from the beginning of the world), and hath now manifested to us whatsoever yet remained to be manifested.<sup>30</sup>

From these two articles, it is clear that the signers of this confession, which included Smyth, and the forty-one of those who had sought refuge with him in the Netherlands, held that the Mosaic Law was a burden, which Christ had removed and replaced. This much is evident in several articles in the confession but particularly in Article 21 which reads:

Man being thus justified by faith, liveth and worketh by love (which the Holy Ghost sheddeth into the heart) in all good works, in the laws, precepts, ordinances given them by God through Christ; he praiseth and blesseth God, by a holy life, for every benefit, especially of the soul; and so are all such plants of the Lord trees of righteousness, who honor God through good works, and expect a blessed reward.<sup>31</sup>

In this confession it is clear that the law of Moses was replaced by Christ, who fulfilled the Law. It is also quite evident that as with most Anabaptists, the Old Testament no longer had the force of the New Testament for the Christian.

In a third confession brought out in 1612, the Smyth congregation reflects a further development of the understanding of the Law and its relationship to the Gospel. In Article 33 the confession declared, "for He [Christ] cancelled the handwriting of ordinances, the hatred, the law of commandments in ordinances (Eph. ii. 15; Colos. ii. 14) which was against us (Deut. xxxi. 26); . . ."<sup>32</sup> Echoes of Denck's concern for a consistent moral life is heard in Article 63 which declares that although Christ has fulfilled the Law, the Moral Law is still binding on the Christian.

That the new creature although he be above the law and scriptures, yet he can do nothing against the law or scriptures, but rather all his doings shall serve to the confirming and establishing of the law (Rom iii. 31). Therefore he cannot lie, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill, nor hate any man, or do any other fleshly action, and therefore all fleshly libertinism is contrary to regeneration, detestable, and damnable (John viii. 34; Rom vi. 15, 16, 18; 2 Pet ii. 18, 19; I John v. 18).<sup>33</sup>

Previously Article 62 had presented the concept in a slightly different way. It declared that Christ is above the Law and the Christian is also

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>32</sup>*Propositions and Conclusions concerning True Christian Religion, containing a Confession of Faith of certain English people, living at Amsterdam*, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 129.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 136.

above the law, but he is not to take this to mean that he should live a lawless life, for he is bound by a higher law. Article 68 further delineates the role of Law and Gospel for the Christian:

That faith is a knowledge in the mind of the doctrine of the law and gospel contained in the prophetical, and apostolical scriptures of the Old and New Testament: accompanying repentance with an assurance that God, through Christ, will perform unto us His promises of remission of sins, and mortification, upon the condition of our unfeigned repentance, and amendment of life (Rom x. 13, 14, 15; Acts v. 30–32; and Acts ii. 38, 39; Heb xi. I; Mark i. 15).<sup>34</sup>

It is not surprising that the General Baptists, as the followers of John Smyth and those of Thomas Helwys, who went back to England in 1612, were eventually known, reflect an essentially Anabaptist understanding of Law and Gospel.

### *Particular Baptists*

Arising out of the Independent Puritan congregation of Henry Jessey in London, there emerged a Calvinistic Baptist movement. In a succession of schisms from the original Puritan conventical in 1633, 1638, and finally in 1642, there were formed three churches which adopted believers' baptism by immersion and because they held that Christ died only for the elect, they became known by the end of the century as Particular Baptists. These three congregations by 1644 had become seven, and issued what is called the First London Confession of Faith. This confession was revised in 1646 and until the Second London Confession, became the most widely distributed confession among Particular Baptists. While these articles lack anything resembling a full treatment of the Law, the implication is that Christ has fulfilled the Law and, therefore, has replaced the Law. Article X, which has a number of scripture references in the margin, reads:

Touching his Office, Jesus Christ onely is made the Mediator of the New Covenant, even the everlasting Covenant of grace between God and Man, to be perfectly and fully the Prophet, Priest and King of the Church of God for evermore.<sup>35</sup>

Article XXV reflects a very negative view of the Law. It was viewed as unnecessary and therefore irrelevant.

The preaching of the gospel to the conversion of sinners, is absolutely free; no way requiring as absolutely necessary, any qualifications,

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>*The Confession of Faith, Of those Churches which are commonly (though falsly) called Anabaptists, in Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, 159.*

preparations, or terrors of the law, or preceding ministry of the law, but only and alone the naked soul, a sinner and ungodly, to receive Christ crucified, dead and buried, and risen again; who is made a prince and a Saviour for such sinners as through the gospel shall be brought to believe on Him.<sup>36</sup>

This article intends to say that the Law, much as the General Baptists said, is a burden and a terror from which the Christian is set free. But it goes on to imply that the purpose of the Law was to reveal the sinful soul, naked in the presence of God, and yet one that could receive Christ, and, therefore, experience new life in Him. This confession also acknowledges in Articles XXVIII and XXIX "Christ as head and King in this new Covenant."<sup>37</sup> It is followed by the statement in Article XXX,

All beleevers through the knowledge of that Justification of life given by the Father, and brought forth by the blood of Christ, have this as their great privilege of the new Covenant, peace with God, and reconciliation, whereby they that were afarre off, were brought nigh by the blood, and have (as the Scripture speaks) peace passing all understanding, yea, joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom wee have received the Atonement.<sup>38</sup>

It is evident from these articles that the Particular Baptists gave less attention to the Law and the Gospel than did the General Baptists. In spite of their Calvinistic soteriology, they too identified the Old Covenant with the Law, which is no longer binding, and the New Covenant with Christ, who is the new "Lawgiver" who establishes his law in the heart.<sup>39</sup>

Article LII brings this first Particular Baptist confession to a close with these memorable words:

And thus wee desire to give unto God that which is Gods, and unto Cesar that which is Cesars, and unto all men that which belongeth unto

<sup>36</sup>*The First London Confession of Faith, 1646 Edition, With an Appendix by Benjamin Cox, 1646* (Rochester, NY: Backus Book Publishers, 1981) 10.

<sup>37</sup>*Confession of Faith*, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 164.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 164–65.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 170. "But if God with-hold the Magistrates allowance and furtherance herein; yet we must notwithstanding proceed together in Christian communion, not daring to give place to suspend our practice, but to walk in obedience to Christ in the profession and holding forth this faith before mentioned, even in the midst of all trials and afflictions, not accounting our goods, lands, wives, children, fathers, mothers, brethren, sisters, yea, and our own lives dear unto us, so we mag (*sic*) finish our course with joy: remembering alwayes we ought to obey God rather then men, and grounding upon the commandment, commission and promise of our Lord and master Jesus Christ who as he hath all power in heaven and earth, so also hath promised, if we keep his commandments which he hath given us, to be with us to the end of the world: and when we have finished our course, and kept the faith, to give us the crowne of righteousness, which is laid up for all that love his appearing, and to whom we must give an account of all our actions, no man being able to discharge us of the same."

them, endeavouring our selves to have alwayes a cleare conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. And if any take this that we have said, to be heresie, then doe wee with the Apostle freely confesse, that after the way which they call heresie, worship we the God of our Fathers, beleeving all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets and Apostles, desiring from our soules to disclaime all heresies and opinions which are not after Christ, and to be stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the worke of the Lord, as knowing our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

I Cor. I. 24: *Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith we stand.* [FINIS]<sup>40</sup>

The Second London Confession (1677–1688) was based upon the Westminster Confession of 1647. The Westminster divines drew heavily upon the First and Second Helvetic Confessions. Although Particular Baptists adopted this confession, the revised edition of the First London Confession continued to be popular and more widely distributed in some areas than the Second London Confession. The occasion for the adoption of the Second London Confession was to show substantial agreement with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists during a time of renewed persecution in England. The Clarendon Code, a series of acts passed by Parliament from 1661–1665 designed to suppress dissent, was in the process of renewed enforcement. The Presbyterians, who were numbered among the dissenters after 1660, had successfully resisted the harshest aspects of the new laws. The Baptists and Congregationalists, who had not fared as well, hastened to identify with the Presbyterians. Hence, the Particular Baptists called for an assembly to consider revising the Westminster Confession for this purpose.

Before the assembly convened, William Collins, a pastor in London, had revised the Westminster Confession to express a distinctive Baptist ecclesiology. With some exceptions, the proposed revision was in many places word for word identical with the Westminster document. Therefore, for the first time in any Baptist confession, there is a long section (Chapter 19) devoted to the Law of God. This chapter reproduces verbatim the Westminster Confession, with the exception of the first two clauses. In seven paragraphs the Law of God is further delineated as “moral law,” as set forth in the Ten Commandments, and ceremonial law, “containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; . . .”<sup>41</sup> In the fourth paragraph, it explains that the judicial

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 170–71.

<sup>41</sup>*Confession of Faith Put forth by the Elders and Brethren of many Congregations of Christians (baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country, in Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions, 276.*

laws which were no longer binding except "their general equity onely, being of moral use."<sup>42</sup> The remainder of the paragraphs attempt to explain that the "moral law" is still binding for Christians. It states, "Neither doth *Christ* in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation."<sup>43</sup> In the sixth paragraph it explains that this does not mean that we who know Christ are under a covenant of works, but nevertheless the law provides "a Rule of *life*, informing them of the Will of *God*, and their Duty, it directs and binds them, to walk accordingly discovering also the sinfull pollutions of their Natures, Hearts and Lives; . . ."<sup>44</sup> The latter part of the paragraph goes to much pains to deny that this is once again putting the Christian under the Law, as it says rather awkwardly,

The Promises of it likewise shew them Gods approbation of Obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance therof, though not as due to them by the Law as a Covenant of Works; so as mans doing Good and refraining from Evil, because the Law encourageth to the one and deterreth from the other, is no Evidence of his being under the Law and not under Grace.<sup>45</sup>

The Confession then reiterates in paragraph seven that while the Christian is bound to obey the moral law, it is still not a covenant of works and not contrary to grace, "but do sweetly comply with it; the *Spirit* of *Christ* subduing and inabling the Will of man, to do that freely and chearfully, which the will of God revealed in the law, requireth to be done."<sup>46</sup>

Absent from this confession and the Westminster Confession, is any emphasis upon "the burden," or "curse" of the law and the pedagogical function of the law in bringing one to Christ. The emphasis is, however, upon the Moral Law as enunciated by Moses in the decalogue which was held to be still binding upon the Christian, but not necessary for salvation. It appears that the Westminster Confession of Faith attempted to avoid the charge of antinomianism, while maintaining that salvation does not come through works but by grace. The Second London Confession, therefore, represents a greater shift from both the First London Confession of 1644 and 1646 than from the General Baptist Confession of 1612.

Chapter XX of the Westminster Confession proceeds to discuss Christian Liberty and the liberty of conscience. The confession explains that the Christian is free from the ceremonial law and to affirm, "God

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 276-77.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 277.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship."<sup>47</sup> However, in the next two paragraphs, the confession indicates certain erroneous opinions or, "the manner of publishing or maintaining them," can be cause for intervention by the church and by the "power of the civil magistrate."<sup>48</sup> At this point the Second London Confession departs from the order of the Westminster to discuss in its Chapter XX, "Of the Gospel, and of the extent of the Grace thereof." It then moves to consider the Gospel as over against the failure of the Law, the first paragraph of which reads,

THE Covenant of Works being broken by Sin, and made unprofitable unto Life; God was pleased to give forth the promise of *Christ*, the Seed of the Woman, as the means of calling the Elect, and begetting in them Faith and Repentance; in this Promise, the Gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and therein Effectual, for the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners.<sup>49</sup>

The fourth paragraph of the Second London Confession indicates that

the Gospel is the only outward means, of revealing *Christ*, and saving Grace; and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in Trespases, may be born again, Quickened or Regenerated; there is moreover necessary, an effectual, insuperable work of the Holy Spirit, . . .<sup>50</sup>

Chapter 21 of the Second London Confession then proceeds to discuss Christian liberty and to emphasize in the second paragraph that, "God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it."<sup>51</sup> Significantly the Baptists left out of this chapter any reference to the power of the magistrate or of the church to intervene where apparent erroneous beliefs or actions are engaged in by Christians, which was probably the saving feature of the Westminster Confession (Article 20) as far as parliament was concerned.

There is little doubt that the Second London Confession introduced into Baptist life a robust Reformed understanding of the Bible, election, and the Law, which had never been prominent features of pre-

<sup>47</sup>*The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1647*, in *The Creeds of Christendom Vol. III: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds with Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969) 644.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 645.

<sup>49</sup>*Confession of Faith Put forth*, in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 278.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 278–79.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 279–80.

vious Baptist confessions. That the Second London Confession never enjoyed the popularity of the First London Confession is evident by the fact that the First London Confession (1646 edition) was still being printed even after the Second London Confession had apparently won the day among the English Particular Baptists. However, the Second London Confession was adopted by the Philadelphia Association in 1742 with two additional articles, and by a few other associations. But, the Separate Baptists, the largest group of Baptists in prewar Colonial America, steadfastly refused until finally in 1783 the Separate General Association of Virginia adopted the Philadelphia Confession with certain reservations, which reads:

To prevent its usurping a tyrannical power over the consciences of any: We do not mean that every person is to be bound to the strict observance of everything therein contained, nor do we mean to make it, in any respect, superior or equal to the scriptures in matters of faith and practice: although we think it the best composition of the kind now extant. . . .<sup>52</sup>

With the appearance of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith in 1833 with its modified Calvinism, the Philadelphia Confession fell into disuse among Baptists in this country.<sup>53</sup>

#### REPRESENTATIVE BAPTIST THEOLOGIANS

In nineteenth century America, Baptists had few formally educated theologians. Although Baptists, like Anabaptists, had an abundance of freelance theologians whose homespun theologies were made up of a number of strains from diverse sources, there were few who were graduates of theological schools. Daniel Parker, whose Two Seed in the Spirit Predestinarian Baptist movement, is illustrative of those whose theologies were developed out of their own creative and innovative genius. Of these, John Leadley Dagg of Virginia, was the most capable and the best known. Through his own efforts he became proficient in Latin, Greek,

<sup>52</sup>Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 353. See also Robert Baylor Semple, *History of the Baptists in Virginia* (No information supplied, 1894, Revised Edition; reprint, Lafayette, Tenn.: Church History Research and Archives, 1976) 92, 93 (page references are to reprint edition).

<sup>53</sup>For an example, article IX on "Election" reads:

[We believe] That Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he [graciously] regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end. (*The New Hampshire Confession* in Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 364)

This confession was revised in 1925 and adapted by the Southern Baptist Convention which revised and enlarged it again in 1963.

and Hebrew, as well as higher mathematics. Eventually after serving as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, he was elected president of Haddington College, and later of Mercer University.<sup>54</sup>

The first formally trained theologian of the nineteenth century and also the most influential, was James Petigru Boyce, the founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and its first president. Boyce was a graduate of Brown University and of Princeton. At Princeton he became thoroughly captivated by the theology of Charles Hodge. His *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, published in 1887, was widely distributed and doubtless shaped the theology of a number of the early graduates of Southern Seminary. In order to insure the orthodoxy of future generations of teachers, Boyce prepared an *Abstract of Principles* which every professor was asked to sign in which each promised "to teach in accordance with, and not contrary to, . . ." In this work, Law and Gospel are only mentioned in a casual way. They are subsumed under the "covenant of works" and the "covenant of grace." In illustrating what constitutes a covenant, Boyce wrote: "Thus, between a government and its responsible subjects, law becomes a covenant."<sup>55</sup> He then continues, "Law prescribed by God as lawgiver is admitted to exist together with its sanctions and penalties; and, as in human law, so here, no excuse can be made of want of formal agreement; because of the natural obligation to obey." He continues:

These facts are, however, more fully applicable to the covenant of works, regarded as the general law of obtaining and maintaining spiritual life, given to all mankind, and still held forth to them, than to the transactions under that covenant connected with Adam's fall.<sup>56</sup>

In numerous places where Boyce discusses the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, he refers the reader to Hodge's outline or manuscript lecture. Apparently he found himself virtually in complete agreement with Hodge's version of Calvinism. Therefore, it is only with the twentieth century theologians that an attempt is made to construct a theological system on something other than Protestant scholastic foundations. But in none of them do we find Law and Gospel as an organizing principle. And only in Carl F. H. Henry's *Personal Ethics* do we find an entire chapter given to a discussion of "the Law and the Gospel."

The first of the twentieth century Baptist theologians of note was Augustus Hopkins Strong, former President and Professor of Biblical

<sup>54</sup>Norman Wade Cox, ed., *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958) s.v. "Dagg, John Leadley," by Malcolm Lester.

<sup>55</sup>James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Reprint, no information given) 235.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*



Theology at the Rochester Theological Seminary. In volume 2 of his three volume *Systematic Theology*, there is a relatively brief discussion of the Law of God. In this section, there are several statements that indicate how limited a role is given the Law in his overall theological system.

The law of God is a general expression of God's will, applicable to all moral beings. . . . The law of God, accordingly, is a *partial*, not an exhaustive, expression of God's nature. It constitutes, indeed, a manifestation of that attribute of holiness which is fundamental in God, and which man must possess in order to be in harmony with God. But it does not fully express God's nature in its aspects of personality, sovereignty, helpfulness, mercy. . . . Mere law, therefore, leaves God's nature in these aspects of personality, sovereignty, helpfulness, mercy, to be expressed toward sinners in another way, namely, through the atoning, regenerating, pardoning, sanctifying work of the gospel of Christ. As creation does not exclude miracles, so law does not exclude grace (Rom 8:3—"what the law could not do . . . God" did).<sup>57</sup>

He quotes approvingly from C. H. Murphy:

Law is a transcript of the mind of God as to what man ought to be. But God is not merely law, but love. There is more in his heart than could be wrapped up in the 'ten words.' Not the law, but only Christ, is the perfect image of God (John 1:17—"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ").<sup>58</sup>

In the fourth place, he writes: "Grace is to be regarded, however, not as abrogating law, but as republishing and enforcing it (Rom 3:31—"we establish the law")."<sup>59</sup> In the fifth and last place he says "thus the revelation of grace, while it takes up and includes in itself the revelation of law, adds something different in kind, namely, the manifestation of the personal love of the Lawgiver. Without grace, law has only a demanding aspect." His final statement is indicative of his understanding of the function of law. "In fine, grace is that the larger and completer manifestation of the divine nature, of which law constitutes the necessary but preparatory stage."<sup>60</sup>

In E. Y. Mullins' *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*, published in 1917, there is even a briefer treatment of the law which is seen in more personal dimensions than that in Strong. Mullins was arguably the most influential, even though not the most creative,

<sup>57</sup>Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1907) 547-48.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 548.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 549.

theologian among Southern Baptists in the twentieth century. His discussion of law is found in a section entitled, "The Biblical Teaching as to Sin." In this section he writes, "Sin has also been defined as a lack of conformity to God's moral law. This also is correct as a partial definition of sin. But lack of conformity to law is not an adequate definition."<sup>61</sup> Further he writes, "Sin manifests itself in many ways but the ruling thought in them all is the departure of the sinner from Jehovah's will. There was indeed transgression of law, but it was Jehovah's law." Once again he discusses sin as a breach of the covenant relation between God and the people. He writes:

God made many covenants with Israel. The Mosaic covenant best expresses the covenant idea. That idea was a nation in religious fellowship with God. Here all the provisions of the law, ceremonial and moral, related to men inside the covenant.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, both covenant and law were seen in their personal dimensions in relationship to God, and not so much in a contractual relationship.

W. T. Conner, Professor of Theology for many years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in *The Gospel of Redemption*, insists that it is the Gospel which brings the cross and the atoning work of Christ into the center stage of the drama of redemption in which the Law also plays an important part. He points out that the Law brings a knowledge of sin, "this shows," he writes, "that there was an intimate connection between the knowledge of the will of God and sin as an active principle in human life."<sup>63</sup> He discusses law in relationship to the revelation of God, the first of which, he says, is in "the revelation of God and nature or the physical world." He continues, "the next stage in the revelation of God as related to sin is his revelation in reason and conscience, or man's rational and moral nature."<sup>64</sup> He explains: "It seems that Paul is setting forth that the requirements of the law, at least in a general way, are revealed in man's moral consciousness, and that obedience to these requirements of the law as thus made known is virtually obedience to the law."<sup>65</sup> "A third stage in God's revelation," Conner writes, "may be denoted by the term law. This is Paul's great term when thinking of God's revelation of himself in relation to man as sinful. By this he means primarily the Old Testament or Mosaic law."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup>Edgar Young Mullins, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1917) 288.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 289.

<sup>63</sup>Walter T. Conner, *The Gospel of Redemption* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1945) 12.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

Conner then goes on to define the law in this respect as "the embodiment of the moral requirements of God in published ordinances."<sup>67</sup> Conner holds that the function of the Law was not to justify or to save, but rather to bring a consciousness of sin and to underline one's helplessness and need of a redeemer. Thus it was pedagogic in its effect in order to lead the sinner to Christ. The fourth and final stage of revelation is "the revelation of the grace of God in Christ which saves from sin."<sup>68</sup> Conner writes: "but we do not get the complete doctrine of sin until we see the grace of God that saves from sin."<sup>69</sup> It is in respect to Christ that Conner sees the Holy Spirit's work in convicting concerning righteousness which only comes with the revelation of the righteousness in Christ which reveals the nature of sin.

We mean by this that the cross shows that God saves us on principles of righteousness. The cross makes it clear that in saving man God did not compromise with sin. The cross of Christ is the most uncompromising condemnation of human sin to be found in either history or experience. Human selfishness and sin stand utterly condemned before that cross as nowhere else in God's world.<sup>70</sup>

In the final analysis, Conner argues that Christ has taken the curse of the Law from us which was not deliverance from a legalistic system but death.

The curse was the curse of death. That curse comes on us because of our sin. The law pronounced that curse of death upon us because of our failure to live up to its requirements. Christ redeemed us from that curse by taking the curse of death upon himself."<sup>71</sup>

In Conner, therefore, we see law as a part of the revelatory process in that it revealed man in his sin in the light of the righteousness of God which brought with it the curse of death which only Christ, in his redemptive act of sacrificial death, could remove.

Perhaps the best known contemporary theologian among Baptists today is Carl F. H. Henry. In his *Christian Personal Ethics*, he devotes an entire chapter to the Law and the Gospel. The thrust of this chapter, as he fences with Brunner and Barth, and the contemporary advocates of existential ethics (the new morality), and the Roman Catholics, is that the Moral Law has not been abrogated. He argues persuasively that the Mosaic Law preceded the prophetic tradition and it states in

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 103.

certain propositions that which was intrinsic and an expression of God's eternal moral will, the Law of God. While the ceremonial laws are no longer binding upon those who have committed themselves to Christ, the Moral Law has never been abolished.

The Law tells what the eternally righteous Creator and Lord requires of his creatures. Since it is based on the nature and purpose of the changeless God, the Law can never be abolished, but remains forever. Not even Christ abrogates the Law taken in this sense, nor is the Divine salvation of the sinners by grace accomplished in violation of the moral law or in disregard to justice.<sup>72</sup>

Again he writes, "the eternal moral law of God is binding on believer and unbeliever alike."<sup>73</sup> After discussing the various aspects of the purpose of the law, he continues the insistence that the Law still is in effect. "It is a pedagogue that brings men to Christ." Then he insists "the Law therefore becomes a means of grace, disclosing the actual nature of sin and man's need for redemption."<sup>74</sup> Henry tries to avoid antinomianism while giving adequate attention to the Gospel. He reconciles his strong insistence that the Moral Law is binding forever with the new strength a Christian has to live according to Mosaic precepts.

The Christian is no longer in hopeless bondage to a moral law he cannot fulfill, binding his conscience to a scheme of behavior beyond his reach as a sinner, and exhibiting him as a slave mastered by sin. Now the law's power against him is broken. God's free grace to the sinner has shattered the condemning power of the law and his inspired moral endeavor with the liberty and assurance of spiritual life.<sup>75</sup>

In this vein he continues to point out the relationship between Law and Gospel for the Christian life. "In the context of salvation by grace, the Law serves as the external criterion of virtue, as the rule of moral good and evil for the believer's walk and conversation. It sets forth the will of God in terms of what ought to be accomplished and avoided."<sup>76</sup> Though, Henry argues that the Law does not lose its force against the Christian because it is inferior to the Gospel, or faulty form of "ethical demand," but "because its requirements have been fully met for him by Christ."<sup>77</sup>

<sup>72</sup>Carl F. H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957) 350.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 357.

There is more Law than Gospel in this chapter. As compared with Conner, who finds the fullest revelation by God in the Gospel and in the love which that Gospel engenders in Christian life, it is a little difficult to see that Henry has grasped anything like the significance of the Gospel and specifically the cross as a fuller—even ultimate—revelation of God. Perhaps because his chapter is essentially a polemic against what he considers modern distortions of ethics, it appears to short change the Gospel.

Another contemporary Baptist theologian, James Leo Garrett, has just recently brought out the first volume of his two volume *Systematic Theology*. In contrast with Henry, Garrett has genuine appreciation for certain aspects of Brunner's delineation of the relationship of Law and Gospel. He also shows a greater awareness of the radical difference between the Mosaic law and the *kerygma*. Garrett is closer to Conner when he insists that "under the gospel of Christ, or under the gospel of grace, the law has a revelatory or convictive function." Like Conner, Garrett also holds that the Gospel in its power brings greater conviction for sin than the Law could ever bring.

The deepest revelation of the nature and awfulness of sin is not in the conscience of human beings or through the law of God but in the message centered in the death of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. His cross was not only a revelation of God's love for sinful humankind, but also an unmasking of the very nature and awfulness of sin: the rejection of Jesus' interiorizing of the law, the refusal of God's greatest gift to humanity, the violent putting to death by creaturely humans of the Creator's Son, and the spurning of that very self-giving love (*agapē*) by which God chose to redeem humankind. "It is a strong paradox that part of the 'good news' is the revelation of the true meaning of sin."<sup>78</sup>

Garrett reflects the influence of W. T. Conner who emphasized the absolute necessity of the gospel for both its convicting power and its transforming grace. From this study, it appears that Conner and Garrett are closer to the Anabaptists' and early English Baptists' insistence upon the uniqueness of the Gospel as fulfillment of the Law, and also as a final and complete revelation of God, than any of the other Baptist theologians discussed here.

### Conclusion

It is readily apparent that both Anabaptists and Baptists have historically understood the Law and the Gospel in a variety of different theological formulations. There is, however, a rather consistent understanding

<sup>78</sup>James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) 502.

of the relationship of Law and Gospel in both Anabaptist treatments of the subject and Baptist understanding. The first major deviation from this commonality was that which was inserted into Baptist life with the adoption of the major features of the Westminster Confession, and particularly its long chapter on the Law. By this means Protestant Scholasticism, characteristic of Calvinism as expressed in the Second Helvetic Confession of Faith, was inserted into the life of a people whose own understanding was quite different from this theological formulation. Since that event, Boyce and Henry reflect more the influence of this approach to Law and Gospel than do Mullins, Conner, and Garrett.

Yet, there are several elements in the Anabaptist and Baptist understanding of Law and Gospel that are fairly evident. The Moral Law is identified with the Mosaic decalogue. Other aspects of the ceremonial law and judicial law in the Old Testament are not held binding on the Christian. The purpose of the Law was revelatory—to reveal the righteous nature of God and to bring conviction for sin, helping mankind to realize the helplessness of its sinful condition before a righteous God. Thus, it was preparatory and to a certain extent an incomplete revelation of God. The Gospel, on the other hand, focused on the person, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Christ, constituting the ultimate revelation of God, and by the same token the ultimate condemnation of sin. This did not mean in the final analysis that those who had committed their lives to Christ were now free from moral obligations, but rather the new life which was made possible by the Holy Spirit's miracle of the new birth gives one the opportunity to live a life of victory over sin. For the Law is internalized by the Spirit and the Christian is therefore empowered to live a qualitatively different kind of life because of this new relationship to Christ. Therefore, while being justified by faith, the twice born is not thereby automatically antinomian, but rather seeks to live a life of discipleship in obedience to Christ that finds its highest expression in the Law of love as exemplified in the crucified Lord.

# LAW AND GOSPEL IN THE BRETHREN TRADITION

RONALD T. CLUTTER

## INTRODUCTION

THE movement known as the Brethren Church began in 1708 in Germany under the leadership of Alexander Mack (1679-1735), who had been a member of the Reformed Church. Having been influenced strongly by spokesmen for Radical German Pietism and by representatives of the Anabaptist movement, Mack and seven others were baptized by trine immersion in August 1708 and began a new church initially referring to themselves as "Brethren."<sup>1</sup> Persecution was soon in coming in an era which did not encourage religious tolerance and the growing church relocated, eventually immigrating to America in two groups, one in 1719 and the second, including Mack, in 1729.

Emphasizing the Bible as its soul authority and eschewing creedal subscription, the Brethren found themselves on occasion subject to differing interpretations from their church leaders. The focus of this study is upon the concepts of law and gospel as articulated by some prominent persons in the history of the movement. First the views of

<sup>1</sup>The Brethren movement has been identified by many names. The early Brethren by design had no distinctive name for their fellowship of believers. They simply referred to themselves as *Brüder* ("brethren") or sometimes as *Taufgesinnten* ("Baptist-minded"). Others quickly began to call them *Täufer* ("[Ana]Baptists") or *Neue Täufer* ("New [Ana]Baptists") to distinguish them from the Mennonites and Swiss Brethren that they so closely resembled. They were also called *Schwarzenau Täufer* after the place where the movement originated. Various nicknames that referred to their dramatic form of immersion baptism were *Dompelaar* and *Tunker* or *Tunck-Täufer* (from the German word *tunken*, meaning "to dunk," or "immerse").

In America, Brethren were sometimes called *Sunday Baptists* or *First-Day Baptists* to distinguish them from the sabbatarian Ephrata community whose members were known as *Seventh Day Baptists* (also *Seventh-Dayers*). Nicknames for the Brethren included *Tumblers*, *Tumplers*, and *Tunkers*. English-speaking outsiders tended to use *Dunkers* or *Dunkards*. Brethren have ordinarily disliked the term *Dunkard*. (Donald F. Durnbaugh and Dennis D. Martin, "Names, Brethren" in *The Brethren Encyclopedia* [Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1983] 2:910-11.

For the purposes of this study, the term "Brethren" will be used to identify the movement.

Mack will be considered. Attention will then turn to the teachings of Peter Nead (1796–1877), who “was the chief spokesman for the style of life, the simplicity of doctrine, and the general world view of the German Baptist Brethren which prevailed from the Revolutionary War until about 1850.”<sup>2</sup>

Following a three-fold division of the church in 1882–83, the body known as The Brethren Church was formed, composed of those who expressed the progressive stance that was one of the reasons for the schism. One leader of this church was Charles F. Yoder (1873–1955), who will be considered after Nead. Finally, attention will be turned to some participants in the dissension within The Brethren Church which led to further division in 1939. That break resulted in two groups claiming the same tradition, one retaining the title The Brethren Church, the other taking the name of the National Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. Many factors led to this split, one being the issue that is the concern of this study. Charges of legalism and antinomianism were part of the sometimes bitter exchange between the two Brethren factions.

#### THE TEACHING OF ALEXANDER MACK

##### *Background*

Alexander Mack,<sup>3</sup> the founder and first minister of the Brethren, received no formal theological education. As a miller in Schriesheim Mack was influenced strongly by the Radical Pietist and Separatist, Ernst Christoph Hochmann von Hochenau, with whom he traveled and preached in 1706. Bible study and prayer meetings were begun in Mack's home and as a result of success in evangelistic meetings with Hochmann, the officials of the Reformed Church in Heidelberg sought and received government assistance in opposing the unauthorized gatherings. Mack and his wife fled Schriesheim, settling in the Wittgenstein town of Schwarzenau. Continuing to travel with Hochmann, Mack came into contact with Anabaptists who impressed him with their expression of faith and their doctrine of the church.

This twofold influence of Radical Pietism and Anabaptists served as a foundation for the development of Mack's thought. Concerned about a faith that was more than mere confession but that also resulted in an obedient life, Mack became convinced of the importance of baptism by immersion for those who had come to faith in Christ. The great

<sup>2</sup>Fred W. Benedict, “Nead, Peter” in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, 2:918.

<sup>3</sup>A brief survey of the life of Alexander Mack by William G. Willoughby can be found in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, 2:775–777. Willoughby also has written a biography on Mack, *Counting the Cost* (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press, 1979).



emphasis placed on baptism by Mack and those who met with him brought tension to the relationship with Hochmann but Mack was convinced of the need to follow the scriptures rather than man, even a godly man such as Hochmann.

### *The Necessity of Obedience to Commandments*

The emphasis on obedience to the commands of God has been a part of the Brethren tradition from its beginning. Though Mack clearly stated that good news of salvation was received through faith, his concept of faith encompassed more than acceptance of the Savior. "It has been testified sufficiently above that we do not seek to earn salvation with these simple works, but by faith in Christ alone. If it is to be saving faith, it must produce works of obedience."<sup>4</sup> The question to be answered was obedience to which commands.

Mack, though allowing for continuity between the Old and New Testaments, drew a clear distinction between the commands of the Old and those of the New.

We are of the opinion and believe as the apostle writes (Heb. 7:12): "For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well." As long as the Levitical priesthood existed, just that long no one dared to annul the law, or circumcision, without incurring God's grave punishment and displeasure. However, when Christ came He introduced a law of life as the eternal High Priest and Son of God. He annulled the first law because it was too weak and could not make anyone perfect. He secured eternal redemption, revealed the paths to the Holy of Holies, and gave only laws of life. . . .

Therefore, we believe that the teaching of Jesus the crucified must be kept until He himself shall come again and take vengeance with the flaming fire upon those who are not obedient to His gospel, according to Paul's witness (2 Thessalonians 1:8). For this reason, then, the teachings of Jesus are rightly to be observed by believers in these days. However, there are no commandments for unbelievers.<sup>5</sup>

Mack assumed that obedience to the instructions of Jesus is not to be considered an option but a necessity.

Thus, it may be readily believed that God most certainly wants everything to be kept which He has made known and revealed to the whole world in these latter times through His beloved Son. That is, all who call themselves Christians should live as children of one household. The

<sup>4</sup>Alexander Mack, "Answers to Gruber's Basic Questions," trans. by Donald F. Durnbaugh, in *European Origins of the Brethren*, ed. by Donald F. Durnbaugh (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press, 1958) 335.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 328.

good Householder [*Haus-Vater*] has given them rules and laws which they are to keep and respect well and prudently. Along with it, He has promised them life eternal, if they will obey Him in all things—insignificant as well as the important ones. However, none of the teachings and ordinances of our Lord Jesus may be considered insignificant, for they were indeed commanded and ordained by an all-powerful Monarch and King.<sup>6</sup>

He wrote further: "Where there is Scriptural faith, it will also produce the true love according to the Scriptures. 'This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments' (1 John 5:3)."<sup>7</sup>

The obedience called for is not an extra effort on the part of the child of God but is the result of the quality of saving faith. Mack argued: "Faith in Christ produces obedience and submission to all of His words and commandments."<sup>8</sup> Especially significant was the obedience in submitting to believer's baptism. Though salvation is not received by baptism, a person who professed faith but refused submission to believer's baptism was considered an unbeliever.

We do indeed believe and profess that eternal life is not promised because of baptism, but only through faith in Christ (John 3:15, 18). Why should a believer not wish to do the will of Him in whom he believes? If it is the will of Christ that a believer should be baptized, then it is also the will of the believer. If he thus wills and believes as Christ wills, he is saved, even if it were impossible for him to receive baptism. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, but it did not happen; the son was not sacrificed. Yet obedience was fulfilled, and the blessing was received. Therefore, a believer who desires to be baptized, but cannot obtain it because of necessity—like the criminal on the cross—is still saved.

If, however, a man does not desire to be baptized, he is rightly to be judged as unbelieving and disobedient, not because of the baptism, but because of his unbelief and disobedience.<sup>9</sup>

Note, Mack did not affirm that baptism saves but that the faith which saves drives the faithful to obedience beyond repentance and belief. In reacting against his Reformed background, he rejected the idea "that faith was an intellectual acceptance of propositional truth."<sup>10</sup> His view of faith and salvation focused not upon the punctiliar moment of initiation, to which some added creedal subscription, but upon the progressive

<sup>6</sup>Alexander Mack, "Rights and Ordinances," trans. by Donald F. Durnbaugh, in *European Origins of the Brethren*, 345–47.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>8</sup>Mack, "Basic Questions," 331.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>Willoughby, *Counting the Cost*, 65.

expression of obedience. Willoughby concluded that Mack interpreted faith as being like "a growing plant rather than a finished structure."<sup>11</sup> He added: "To these early Baptists, faith which was not experienced as an inner commitment to Christ and expressed in practical acts in everyday life was an invalid faith. Only through faith-obedience, expressed voluntarily through acts of love, is one ever made whole."<sup>12</sup> In their desire to obey Christ and follow His example, Mack and his church went to some extremes, subsequently disavowed,<sup>13</sup> including the practice of sexual continence for the married. The practice of the ban also has been judged extreme in some instances.<sup>14</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear that for Mack the Mosaic Law had been done away with the coming of the superior law of Christ. Though he emphasized the necessity of obedience to the commands of Christ, it is best to say that Mack was not a legalist in the sense of imposing laws upon individuals by which they might be saved or sanctified and to recognize that he had a view of faith that was not held commonly by those around him. By faith comes union with Christ and the faithful will do what Christ would have them to do.

#### THE TEACHING OF PETER NEAD

##### *Background*

Raised in a Lutheran home, Nead turned away from the offer of training for ministry in the Lutheran church. For a time a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he was influenced to join the Brethren through a booklet published by Benjamin Bowman who served the church in Rockingham County, Virginia.<sup>15</sup> An author of theological treatises and articles for the denominational paper, Nead's "writings introduced many people to the Brethren and his work became recognized as a standard for the Brethren."<sup>16</sup>

##### *Mosaic Law*

Like Mack, Nead viewed Mosaic law as bound to the Old Testament era and superseded by the work and commands of Christ. He divided the law into two categories, moral and ceremonial, and declared that both were necessary as forerunners to the coming of

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Mack, "Basic Questions," 341.

<sup>14</sup>Albert T. Ronk, *History of the Brethren Church* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Co., 1968) 51-53.

<sup>15</sup>Benedict, "Nead, Peter," 2:918.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 2:919

Jesus.<sup>17</sup> The moral law had the twofold purpose of revealing the righteousness and holiness of God and the condemnation of humankind in failing to measure up to that righteousness. The moral law condemned the sinner.<sup>18</sup> As the moral law brought the knowledge of sin, the ceremonial law "revealed the expiation for sin."<sup>19</sup> The Old Testament offerings and sacrifices did not bring expiation in themselves but were shadows of what was to come.<sup>20</sup>

### *New Testament Law*

Though teaching that the Mosaic law belonged to a previous dispensation, escape from obedience to law was not part of Nead's presentation. The New Testament is also law. Referring to the church, he wrote: "... Her profession: she acknowledges but one head; the Lord Jesus Christ: she acknowledges but one law book; the [New] Testament. She believes that all members are obliged to observe all the laws and ordinances of the one law book."<sup>21</sup> The legalism inherent in this statement is observed by Dale R. Stoffer:

The Christian's responsibility with regard to the precepts delivered by Christ is unqualified obedience. The Brethren tendency of viewing the new life in Christ in legalistic terms is especially strong in Nead. Not one commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be taken lightly or overlooked.<sup>22</sup>

### *The Way of Salvation*

There are four steps involved in securing salvation. The first step is the enlightenment of the person to the truth of the gospel message. The next three steps are the responsibility of the individual who is to act upon the enlightenment provided through God's revelation. These steps, according to Nead, are "repentance towards God and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enter into covenant with God, by being baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."<sup>23</sup>

Repentance is defined as "a change of mind including that reformation of life effected by the power of the Gospel."<sup>24</sup> Nead wrote of

<sup>17</sup>Peter Nead, *Theological Writings on Various Subjects* (reprint of 1866 edition, Poland, OH: Dunker Reprints, 1985) 21.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>22</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, *Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines 1650-1987* (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc., 1989) 116.

<sup>23</sup>Nead, *Theological Writings*, 41.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

faith: "Faith is simply the reception of testimony, and when by the Gospel we are solicited, yea commanded to believe in Jesus Christ, we are to understand so as to credit the testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ, to put our trust in [sic] him as the Saviour and Redeemer of our souls and bodies—and the evidence of Faith is obedience to the Gospel."<sup>25</sup> This faith is commanded by God, who cannot require the impossible of people, and is, therefore, a voluntary exercise of the individual. "Faith then, as well as any other command of the Gospel, is at the control of man, that is it can be obeyed or disobeyed. . . ."<sup>26</sup>

Repentance and faith constitute the individual a subject fit for baptism.<sup>27</sup> Acknowledging that there are those who are aware of the command of baptism but who do not believe it "essential to salvation," Nead proclaimed: ". . . and as it respects my faith, I do believe, that baptism is not only a command, but also essential to salvation."<sup>28</sup> Baptism is a necessary part of the salvation process for God purposes to enter into covenant with the believer "and it is in Baptism that this covenant is ratified."<sup>29</sup> Those who have entered into covenant with God through baptism are the ones able to observe the precepts commanded by Christ and are those with whom He abides (Matt 28:19–20).<sup>30</sup> In opposing the proclamation of salvation by faith alone, Nead referred for support to Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:37–38.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the stress in Nead's words may be the result of the revivalism sweeping the eastern United States in the first half of the 1800s. Nead saw little or no value in these services for though they seemed to generate religious frenzy they did not produce workers for the kingdom of God. He wrote:

For instance—It is certain that all those new converting means, which are held in such high estimation by many, can never accomplish a genuine change in man. I will not dispute but that those strange manoeuvres are calculated to creat [sic] great anxiety, and produce a partial change: but I contend, that inasmuch as they have not been appointed by Jesus Christ, or the apostles, that they have never been blessed, so as to produce a genuine change in man—though we frequently hear the advocates for these modern means say, that they know that God has and does bless these mans. I should like to know in what way? Do they mean, that by the use of those means, so many have joined their society? If this be the blessing they allude to, I am inclined to believe that it is a great

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 313.

curse instead of a blessing. The reader may take it for granted that the doctrines and commandments of men are always in the room of the Gospel, and when received are sure to produce a false impression, and if such deluded souls are not apprized of it in this life, they will be when their case cannot be remedied. I have no doubt, but that thousands believe such revivals occasioned by the outpourings of the Spirit of God and will view me as a great enemy to the spread of christianity. But I cannot well help it; I believe that it is my duty to protest against such corrupt proceedings. I say corrupt, because they are in lieu of the Word of God, and calculated to blind not only the present, but the rising generation. The preachers [sic] sole aim is, the feelings of his audience. If he can only succeed at alarming them, he is sure to gain his point: whereas it is the duty of all preachers to illuminate the understanding in man, by preaching the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ; and if a sense of the Gospel does not cause them to yield obedience to Christ, then their salvation cannot be effected; for the word and Spirit of God is the seed of the new birth, and not the invention of man.<sup>32</sup>

Nead's concern for the church of Jesus Christ to be obedient to His commands resulted in prescribed practices. In addition to baptism, Nead emphasized the threefold communion service—feetwashing, the love feast and the Lord's Supper; the holy kiss; non-swearing of oaths; anointing of the sick with oil in Jesus' name; non-conformity to the world in dress and personal appearance; hospitality and almsgiving. However, this approach to salvation has brought criticism in light of what is considered a serious deficiency. Stoffer concluded that "his legalistic and literalistic approach to the Word tends to emphasize the ordinances, at the expense of the inner spirit and faith which vivify the obedience of faith."<sup>33</sup>

Nead served as a leading spokesman for the traditionalist camp of Brethren who were concerned about a number of progressive steps being allowed within the fellowship, an issue which would lead to division in 1882–83.

#### THE TEACHING OF CHARLES FRANCIS YODER

##### *Background*

Concerns about the progressive ideas "including a salaried ministry, personal choice in dress, a new approach to missions, and interest in secondary and higher education and a commitment to Sunday schools and protracted (evangelistic) meetings"<sup>34</sup> emphasized by some within

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 59–60.

<sup>33</sup>Stoffer, *Background and Development of Brethren Doctrines*, 117.

<sup>34</sup>Robert G. Clouse, "Holsinger, Henry Ritz," in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, 1:621.

the Brethren were partly responsible for a threefold division of the church in 1882–83. The progressive body became known as The Brethren Church, in which C. F. Yoder played an active role. His book, *God's Means of Grace*, presents the typical Brethren emphases concerning the Mosaic law and obedience but with a new approach.

Yoder attended Taylor University and Manchester College before graduating from the University of Chicago with BA (1899) and BD (1902) degrees.<sup>35</sup> He served his church as a pastor, educator and missionary.

### *Mosaic Law*

Like Mack and Nead before him, Yoder interpreted the Mosaic code as the forerunner of the gospel in the unfolding of the program of God. He explained: "There is the bud, then the blossom and then the fruit of ripened seed, which produces another plant with buds and flowers and fruit. So each dispensation has borne its fruit and passed away to give place to a new cycle, with better things."<sup>36</sup> The Mosaic law was preparation for the gospel, the "shadow of good things to come," and fulfilled and done away with in Christ.<sup>37</sup>

In 1931, Yoder wrote articles for *The Brethren Evangelist* in which he discussed the Mosaic law and its relationship to the gospel. These articles were written in the question and answer form, focusing upon matters relating to the ten commandments. He began by denying that the ten commandments were the eternal moral law of God, distinct from the ceremonial and dispensational aspects of the law. He declared: "The ten commandments are a summary of the entire law. Therefore if the summary is moral the whole is moral."<sup>38</sup> He explained that the ten commandments are "abolished in the letter and preserved in the spirit," a situation that is true of the other commands of the law as well.<sup>39</sup> Deuteronomy 25:4, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn" is an example of a commandment not of the ten which is applied in spirit in 1 Corinthians 9:9.<sup>40</sup> Responding to the question of the re-institution of the old covenant in the future age, Yoder wrote:

The truth is that the prophetic language takes the familiar terms of the law to picture the time when it shall be fulfilled in Spirit under the

<sup>35</sup>Dennis D. Martin, "Yoder, Charles Francis," in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, 2:1385.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 38–39.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 39–41.

<sup>38</sup>C. F. Yoder, "Studies in the Scriptures," *The Brethren Evangelist* 53:5 (31 January 1931) 8.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 9.

new covenant made in the blood of Christ. Let us take an example: Psalm 132:12–18, “If thy children (of David) keep my covenant they shall sit on my throne forever, because Jehovah hath chosen Zion. He hath desired it as his habitation. This is my rest forever. Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will bless it. I will satisfy its poor with bread. I will also bless its priests with health and the saints shall shout for joy. There I will make the horn of David to be renewed. “[sic] In Jesus, the only son of David to keep [sic] the covenant, is fulfilled the prophecy (Acts 2:30, 31). Zion is the new Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26). The rest is the rest in the Holy Spirit (Isa. 28:11; Acts 2:1–4). The poor are the repentant sinners, satisfied with the bread of Christ (John 6:35–57). The priests are believers (1 Pet. 2:5) and the voices of jubilee are their sacrifices of praise (Heb. 13:13–16). The horn of David is the scepter of Christ (Acts 4:26–27). It is true that Israel will return to her land in unbelief, but when she looks upon him whom she has pierced she will repent and believe, the same as do the Gentiles (Rom. 10:12–13; 11:25–27).<sup>41</sup>

### *The New Covenant*

The New Covenant, which supersedes the Old, is “but a further unfolding of God’s revelation of Himself” and, as with the Old, has ordinances which are “fundamental to the spiritual life.”<sup>42</sup> The emphasis placed on the ordinances by progressive Brethren, such as Yoder, is different in approach than that of the Brethren tradition. Rather than focusing upon the matter of compliance with the New Covenant ordinances as commands of Christ to be obeyed, a view which Yoder did not deny, he stressed the benefits of obedience. He argued:

The symbols or ordinances are helps to character and means of teaching, and because they are truly “God’s means of grace” they have an intrinsic value which makes them worth contending for. The old apologetic made much of technical arguments and formal obedience. Such arguments now fail to appeal to thinking people so much as arguments based on utility. And, although the point has been much ignored in the past, here is the greatest reason for faithfulness to God’s institutions. They are given for man’s good, by Him who best of all knew man’s needs and how to supply them.<sup>43</sup>

Yoder also affirmed: “The ordinances of the church have an inherent value which makes them worth while, even if they had not the divine command to back them up.”<sup>44</sup> He listed sixteen values with scripture support and commentary.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup>Yoder, “Studies in the Scriptures,” *The Brethren Evangelist* 53:6 (7 February 1931) 8.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 43, 46.

<sup>43</sup>Yoder, *God’s Means of Grace*, 13.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 30–36.



Though approaching the issue of ordinances differently, Yoder nevertheless was in agreement with his forebears in the Brethren tradition as he interpreted the gospel to encompass more than belief in Christ. His "Studies in Scripture" are divided into two parts. First are the gospel doctrines which include church membership qualifications, duties, doctrines, discipline, meetings and ordinances. Gospel ordinances, referring to baptism and the Lord's Supper, make up the second part.<sup>46</sup> This view of the meaning of *gospel* was challenged in the 1930s with the increasing influence of dispensationalism in The Brethren Church.

#### LAW, GOSPEL AND DIVISION

##### *Background*

Having existed for two centuries without a confessional statement and proclaiming that the Bible was the only final authority, the Brethren had encountered division previously. There were at least twenty-one instances of schism among the Brethren in less than two centuries of the movement's existence.<sup>47</sup> With the arrival of the 1930s, leaders in the denomination found themselves involved in heated debate as conflicting theological viewpoints surfaced within the church. Calvinism, dispensationalism and fundamentalism entered into the fellowship through the influence of church leaders such as Alva J. McClain and Louis S. Bauman.

McClain (1888–1968) was converted as a result of revival meetings held by Bauman in 1911 and transferred to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles from the University of Washington. He received his seminary education at Xenia Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian institution. McClain graduated from Occidental College after completing his seminary work. His formal education, therefore, took place in schools that were Calvinistic or fundamental and dispensational. His influence was exercised in The Brethren Church through his pastoral ministry in Philadelphia and particularly through his teaching ministry at Ashland College and, later, Ashland Theological Seminary. He was the most prominent theologian in The Brethren Church and contributed a column regularly to *The Brethren Evangelist*.

Bauman (1875–1950) served as pastor in Philadelphia and later planted and pastored the First Brethren Church of Long Beach, California, which, under his leadership, became the largest church in the denomination. Having been influenced strongly by a friend in his Philadelphia church, Bauman became deeply interested in the subject of prophecy. He became an advocate of dispensationalism and was one of

<sup>46</sup>Yoder, "Studies in the Scriptures," *The Brethren Evangelist* 53:8 (21 February 1931) 8–9.

<sup>47</sup>Robert B. Blair, "Schism," in *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, 2:1152.

the better-known prophecy conference speakers in fundamentalist circles. At one time he had questioned the doctrine known as eternal security but came to cling to that position. Though it would be inappropriate to identify Bauman as a Calvinist, his view of security posed a problem for the more traditional Brethren.

Calvinism was a problem to the Brethren who had historically emphasized the freedom of the individual to choose or not choose to turn to God in faith. The doctrine of election espoused by Calvinism ran contrary to Brethren tradition. The doctrine of eternal security was an offense to Brethren who were convinced that it afforded one assurance of salvation without any necessary expression of Christian obedience. Such Brethren could point to those who, having made a profession of faith, were told that their salvation was certain whether or not they lived in obedience to the ordinances of God. Such a view was contrary to all Brethren teaching.

Dispensationalism posed a problem not because of its interpretations of the prophetic scriptures but because of its view of law and grace. Where Brethren believed that obedience to the commands of God did not violate the principle of grace, dispensationalists proclaimed that the two concepts were incompatible. The latter view was of greatest offense to the traditional Brethren in the consideration of the Sermon on the Mount which contained commands of Christ to be obeyed by the church, according to the Brethren, but was relegated to a future interim period or to a Jewish kingdom by dispensationalists.

Fundamentalism was a movement which was interdenominational in its scope and, therefore, did not put a premium on the ordinances as practiced among the Brethren. The revivalistic emphasis of many fundamentalists also ran against the Brethren concept of a growing faith and obedience, a progressive salvation.

#### THE ISSUE OF LAW

McClain articulated his view of the law in a booklet, *Law and Grace*. He agreed with Yoder that the Mosaic law must be viewed as a whole; that it was incorrect to perpetuate one part of the law while ignoring the rest of its content.<sup>48</sup> That law was given to Israel as the Old Covenant relationship.<sup>49</sup> McClain contended that the word *law* in the New Testament referred to Mosaic law and for a Christian in any sense to be under law means subjection to Mosaic legislation.<sup>50</sup> Most disconcerting to the traditional Brethren was the view of the Sermon on the Mount espoused by McClain. He wrote: "The Sermon on the

<sup>48</sup>Alva J. McClain, *Law and Grace* (reprint of 1954 ed., Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1973) 8.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 31-35.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

Mount is an interpretation, in part, of the same Mosaic law, with special reference to its original inner meaning.”<sup>51</sup> The Sermon on the Mount contains the three aspects of the Mosaic arrangement: moral, civil and ceremonial legislation and also includes the penalties of that law.<sup>52</sup> It is left for the reader to understand that the Christian, freed from responsibility to the Mosaic law, is free from obligation to the Sermon on the Mount. What has been considered an essential part of the gospel content by the Brethren was now declared Old Testament law and not gospel at all.

Bauman made this claim in bold words. “Now, there is *almost* as much gospel of salvation in the “Sermon on the Mount” as there is warmth in an iceberg! *The “Sermon on the Mount” contains no gospel of salvation at all!* The “Sermon on the Mount” is Simon-pure law!”<sup>53</sup> As one compares what Bauman said with the view of the earlier Brethren, there need not be the conclusion of contradiction. The traditional Brethren did view the Sermon on the Mount as law, New Covenant law, while Bauman identified it with Old Covenant law. At this point it is a dispensational Brethren view pitted against the traditional Brethren perspective. Bauman was adamant about salvation by faith alone with absolutely no works attached. However, he was just as assertive in declaring that he was convinced that there was not “a single preacher in our Brethren denomination that does not believe that when a man is saved,—‘born again’—he gives THE EVIDENCE OF HIS SALVATION in a life that is obedient to the will of God as expressed in the commandments of his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>54</sup> Bauman would seem to be incorrect and in disagreement with McClain for the latter did not interpret the Sermon on the Mount as commandments of Jesus directly applicable to the Christian.

Claud Studebaker (1883–1961), pastor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and, later Goshen, Indiana, and Isaac Daniel Bowman (1862–1953) lecturer, pastor and evangelist, wrote in defense of the traditional Brethren position. Studebaker asserted his commitment to salvation by grace through faith alone at the same time that he affirmed that baptism was related to salvation. He wrote about the importance of baptism:

In my commission as a preacher of the Gospel of Christ, the Lord instructs me to teach and to baptize. May I say it makes no difference about baptism? When Christ says (Mark 16:16), “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” have I the liberty to say, baptism bears no

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 13–14.

<sup>53</sup>Louis S. Bauman, “God’s Plan for Our Age,” *The Brethren Evangelist* 58:40 (17 October 1936) 10.

<sup>54</sup>Louis S. Bauman, “The Grace That ‘Bringeth Salvation;’ the Salvation That Bringeth Forth ‘Good Words,’” *The Brethren Evangelist* 60:35 (3 September 1938) 4.

relation to salvation? If Christ told Nicodemus (John 3:5), "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," may I insist on the new birth and ignore the water? Christ was well aware of salvation wholly by grace without the works of the law, it is his gift of life, and Christ has ordained the law of spiritual life. Did the man who insisted on baptism immediately after his confession of Christ, probably that same hour of the night in a cold stream, believe any less in "Salvation by grace through faith," or did he have a higher regard for the plain commands of Christ?<sup>55</sup>

He acknowledged that "baptism does not wash away the sins of the flesh, but it is the outward symbol of that which takes place in the heart of faith and the marvelous grace of God."<sup>56</sup> In defending the Brethren of previous generations, he concluded: "It may be our fathers over-emphasized the importance of baptism, but my feeling is, that they had just as thorough knowledge of salvation by grace without works as any group, but a greater emphasis on obedience to him who ordained life and salvation."<sup>57</sup>

In his concern for the diminishing importance placed upon baptism within fundamental churches, Studebaker asserted:

Baptism in water is always associated with conversion, Scripturally and historically. Such significance is inherent in the nature of the ordinance. I would not say a man could not be saved without baptism, neither would I say it is not essential to salvation. I can say with all positiveness that Christ taught Nicodemus it was an essential part of the new birth. He commissioned me to preach and to baptize, saying "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" and I insist on baptism. If folks are saved without it, I have no regrets, but be it far from me so to teach it. I believe just as strongly as any that "We are justified by faith without the works of the law," but am just as firmly convinced that God has placed the holy ordinance of baptism at the door of the church as a monumental testimony of indisputable character that man must be cleansed, born anew, by faith in him who died and rose again, by the power of the triune God, and the church does well to give it due significance as a mighty argument for the doctrine of salvation. She removes the ordinance at great peril to those doctrines.<sup>58</sup>

He continued to express his concern in another article published two years later. Commenting on Ephesians 5:26, he wrote:

<sup>55</sup>Claud Studebaker, "Importance of Christian Baptism," *The Brethren Evangelist* 56:24 (16 June 1934) 7.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>58</sup>Claud Studebaker, "The Importance of Christian Baptism—Second Article," *The Brethren Evangelist* 56:31 (11 August 1934) 8.

My first conclusion was, there is no cleansing of my heart by the word, unless I obey the word. No matter what your spiritual understanding, no disobedient soul will be cleansed by the word. I think of Naaman, when the prophet speaking the word of God without any show of power of the Almighty, quietly sent word, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." (II Kings 5:10). I believe if Naaman had not dipped himself seven times in the Jordan river he would not have been cleansed. The word cleansed him, but the word said, "dip in water," and therefore, if he had expected the word to cleanse without water, he would have no doubt have died a leper. The water did not cleanse, his obedience did not cleanse, but he could not have the cleansing of the word without obedience to it, and if the word involved water and dipping in it, then in order for the word to cleanse, everything that the word says must be done.<sup>59</sup>

After quoting a large number of New Testament texts in which obedience is the emphasis, he concluded: "Certainly, these texts are sufficient to emphasize the fundamental fact that, cleansing, begetting, purifying your souls, being born again, partaking of divine nature, is accomplished obedience to the word of God which liveth and abideth forever."<sup>60</sup>

I. D. Bowman furthered the debate in The Brethren Church as he affirmed of the gospel: "Part of the story of salvation is told in one place and part in another. It takes the *whole* Gospel to tell the whole story of salvation."<sup>61</sup> He added:

Let us take the message of the whole Gospel, and not merely a part of it. Faith is necessary, most assuredly, but we also read of the necessity of Repentance, Baptism, Conversion, Regeneration, Confession, Calling on the Name of the Lord, Hope, Love, Obedience to the whole Gospel according to the light and ability that we have. We accept the whole Gospel for ultimate and complete salvation.<sup>62</sup>

L. S. Bauman responded to Bowman and to George T. Ronk, whose moderator's address before the 1935 Illiokota District was reprinted in *The Brethren Evangelist* and included criticism of what he branded a Neo-Calvinism which threatened Brethren values.<sup>63</sup> Bauman's chief concerns were the emphasis on baptism and the Sermon on the Mount.

<sup>59</sup>Claud Studebaker, "Cleansing By The Word," *The Brethren Evangelist* 58:22 (6 June 1936) 7.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>61</sup>I. D. Bowman, "Progressive Unfolding of God's Plan of Salvation," *The Brethren Evangelist* 57:48 (14 December 1935) 12.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>George T. Ronk, "Freedom—Mediation—Sainthood," *The Brethren Evangelist* 57:49 (21 December 1935) 2, 19–20; and 57:50 (28 December 1935) 12–14.

He used an experience to challenge what he viewed as a potentially dangerous over-estimation of believer's baptism.

We shall never forget that once upon a time, we asked a very stalwart Brethren brother whether or not sprinkling was baptism. "Certainly not!" was the emphatic response; "baptism means dipping, and if you are not dipped, you are not baptized!" Later on, we put this question to him: "Brother, do you believe a man can be saved without baptism?" "Certainly not," said he; "the Bible settles that! 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved!'" At a later date, this brother was urging us to attend "a wonderful conference," saying that it was proving "such a great spiritual blessing" to him. We replied: "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, the speakers on that program are nearly all sprinkled Presbyterians. Therefore, they have not been baptized. Therefore, they are not saved."<sup>64</sup>

Bauman sought to prove that salvation is only by grace through faith without interacting with the issue which produced the conflict, that is, differing definitions of salvation. Bauman focused upon the moment of rebirth while other Brethren focused on the life that was produced by the faith professed. Both suffered from a short-sightedness which could not see the other position in proper perspective. This problem is evident as Bauman again stressed that the Sermon on the Mount is not gospel.

It is the very essence of the holy law of God. It is the finest standard for moral living ever formulated. It is utterly divine! No child of God will fail to profit by its teaching. And yet, IT DOES NOT CONTAIN A SINGLE LINE OF THE GOSPEL (i.e., the "good news") of CHRIST. It is the *law* of Christ, not the *Gospel* of Christ.<sup>65</sup>

Again, the issue of the Brethren distinction between Old Testament law and New Testament law was not addressed. On the other hand, the traditional Brethren writers failed to account for the close affinity of the Sermon on the Mount to the Mosaic legislation.

I. D. Bowman tried to steer a course between faith and works as he also sought to maintain a middle road between Calvinistic and Arminian soteriology. He valued the Calvinist emphasis on salvation by grace but was concerned about the underestimating of obedience. He commended the Arminian emphasis on obedience to God but was concerned that it tended to overlook that emphasis on salvation by grace.<sup>66</sup> Recognizing the importance of the conflict confronting the

<sup>64</sup>Louis S. Bauman, "SALVATION: By the Working of Law? or, 'By Grace Through Faith'?", 58:1 (4 January 1936) 7.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>66</sup>I. D. Bowman, "Grace and Obedience," *The Brethren Evangelist* 60:18 (30 April 1938) 17.

denomination, he concluded: "A proper balance between grace and works of faith is hard to attain so we should seek the unity of the Spirit, pray for the love of God that never faileth and that we be one in Christ, dwelling together in unity."<sup>67</sup> The next year witnessed the division of The Brethren Church.

#### CONCLUSION

With its theme "The Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible," and the refusal to adopt a confessional formula to identify with a particular doctrinal position, the Brethren found themselves wrestling with the problem of differing interpretations of the scriptures by men committed to the same Lord and the same scripture testimony. Winds of social change and theological development created circumstances where conflicting interpretations of the Word of God issued forth from within the same tradition. The most grievous fact is that, though certain divisions of the church may have been inevitable due to the forces that drove the differing factions, there was apparent failure to understand, or even attempt to understand, the opposition.

Throughout Brethren history, the Mosaic law has been viewed as surpassed by the New Covenant message of Christ. The issue of the relationship of the Christian to Mosaic legislation did not pose a problem for the Brethren who focused on the New Covenant. But controversy has developed concerning the content of the message of the New Covenant.

That New Covenant message is the good news, the gospel. But what is the gospel? Is it the message of Jesus crucified, buried and raised from the dead? Or is it the whole New Testament formula for Christian experience: repentance, faith, baptism and a life of obedience? What is the place of the Sermon on the Mount? Is it the revelation of what was intended in Mosaic law and, therefore, applicable only to a law economy, or is it the embodiment of the commands of Jesus to be practiced by His followers who are responsible to observe whatever He has commanded?

With regard to the human responsibility in salvation, what is faith? Is it a commitment to Christ as Savior in a punctiliar sense, a decision made at a particular point of time or is it dynamic force which bears fruit in continued obedience to the ordinances of the New Testament? Does faith bring new birth which then makes possible obedience or is saving faith of such a quality that obedience flows from it?

It is of interest to Brethren that a segment of evangelicalism today is wrestling with a concept called Lordship salvation. Those identified

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 19.

as advocating Lordship salvation are occasionally accused of capitulating to a principle of Reformed, or Covenant, theology. However, for almost three centuries, a non-Calvinistic movement has been calling for saving faith to be evidenced in obedience. This movement, small in comparison to the major denominations, has long struggled to define appropriately the gospel and relate its message properly to the commands of God. Tragically, this striving to understand and define has on occasion been one factor, among other conflicts, which has resulted in schism as some in the conflict have been unable to understand, and/or, appreciate the perspective of the opposition. Brethren history demonstrates the debate about the content of the "good news" can lead to "bad news" for the church if the call of the Lord to love and unity is ignored by brothers and sisters in Christ.



## LAW AND GOSPEL IN THE WESLEYAN TRADITION

DONALD W. DAYTON

ONE of the great puzzles about the literature interpreting modern “evangelicalism” is that the historical and theological experience of Methodism is hardly ever used to provide the categories of interpretation. Historically, this is very surprising because the Methodist movement, founded largely under the influence of John Wesley, has been the major continuing product of the “Evangelical Revival” of the 18th century that set the tone for what has become known as “evangelicalism.” This is particularly relevant to the North American experience where the period from roughly 1820 to World War I has been interchangeably described by historians as the “age of Methodism” and the “age of evangelicalism.” And if one turns attention to the modern progeny of Wesley—either to the children of Methodism (the holiness movement) or to the grandchildren of Methodism (the pentecostal movement), this neglect becomes even more obvious demographically because the vast majority of the membership of such groups as the National Association of Evangelicals or of the Christian College Consortium stands in this theological lineage. I am gratified therefore that the planners of this meeting have included the Wesleyan tradition among those whose understanding of “law and gospel” has an important contribution to make to the theological articulation of an “evangelical” perspective on this key issue.

Before turning directly to Wesley and his understanding of “law and gospel,” I need to make a few preliminary comments about how to position Wesley in the larger Christian and evangelical panorama. One of the reasons for the neglect of the Wesleyan tradition in the larger interpretation of the “evangelical” experience is that there are strange quirks in the way that we use the label “evangelical”—and in the fact that behind the word is such basic confusion that we may speak of “evangelicalism” as such as “an essentially contested concept,” to use an expression more at home in the British philosophical context. In several places<sup>1</sup> I have

<sup>1</sup>Most recently in my essays in a volume I edited with Robert Johnston, *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991—paperback edition Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991).

developed a typology of conflicting meanings of the word “evangelical” that roots each in various periods of conflict within the life of the church. The first meaning of “evangelical” derives its basic thrust from the Protestant Reformation and may be described theologically in terms of the great *sola*’s of Martin Luther: by *faith* alone, by *grace* alone, by *Christ* alone, and by *scripture* alone—a formulation of the gospel that makes the theme of “justification of faith” the organizing principle. The most recent experience giving rise to a set of connotations for the word “evangelical” has been the fundamentalist/modernist controversy, in which the basic thrust of the word “evangelical” has come to mean opposition to “modernity” and the “modern” reinterpretations of Christian faith that have emerged since the Enlightenment. In this sense “evangelical” conveys less of a theological position (with a particular perspective on the standard theological loci—that is, a particular doctrine of God, of human nature, of salvation, etc.) than a particular methodological stance with regard to Enlightenment “liberalism” that positions “evangelicalism” methodologically just to the right of “neo-orthodoxy” and just to the left of “fundamentalism” on some sort of spectrum that measures accommodation to the Enlightenment. I would contend that Wesley and classical Methodism constitute a third paradigm of what it means to be “evangelical”—one that I would call “classical evangelicalism.” This position is a bit harder to describe theologically, but it brings the experience of conversion and regeneration to the fore in a way that organizes the gospel around themes of “sanctification” and the nature of the “Christian walk and life” that result from such an experience.

I want to suggest, then, that our dialogue about many issues is hampered by the fact that our use of the word “evangelical” today is largely determined by the conflicts of the 16th or the 20th centuries in such a way as to suppress the experience of the 18th century and lead us away from it and the determinative role of Methodism in the shaping of most modern forms of “evangelicalism.” And the significant point for our discussion today is that the thought of John Wesley firmly resists being collapsed into the categories of either the 20th or the 16th century meanings of what it means to be “evangelical.”

David Bebbington, speaking from the other side of the Atlantic, is about the only interpreter of “evangelicalism” that I have seen to notice the profound influence of the Enlightenment on the “evangelical” experience and its many continuities with it.<sup>2</sup> Another way of making this point is to remind ourselves of the fact that Methodism

<sup>2</sup>Bebbington makes this point regularly, but most explicitly in his contribution to the recent festschrift for John Stott, “Evangelical Christianity and the Enlightenment,” Martyn Eden and David F. Wells, editors, *The Gospel in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991).

was the first major Christian movement after the Enlightenment and was to a remarkable extent radically contextualized to it and its categories of thought. This is clearly seen in the positive manner in which Wesley refers to "reason" in a way that is very foreign to both Luther and modern fundamentalist evangelicalism—a point which I shall demonstrate from Wesley momentarily.

Luther has become such a symbol of the Reformation and his categories of thought have become so determinative for all of protestantism that we sometimes neglect the extent to which we cannot understand either Wesley or eighteenth century "evangelicalism" in this theological line. This is so true that I wonder if we may understand Wesleyanism as a form of protestantism at all. Something like this was argued over half a century ago by French Catholic priest Maximin Piette in *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism*,<sup>3</sup> in which it is suggested that Wesley constituted a sort of reversion to Catholicism within the Protestant tradition. We don't have the time to explore this thesis but, since it will be central to the case that I wish to make, I will point to a few provocative illustrations of this perspective that will help provide the context for understanding Wesley's doctrine of "law and gospel":

(1) Historically, we should remind ourselves that Wesley stands to a great extent outside the continental reformation and remained to his death an Anglican priest who was influenced as much by Anglo-catholicism as he was by his mother's Puritan and dissenting background. He stood in the tradition of Anglican "moralism" tempered by other influences as diverse as Moravian pietism and Catholic mysticism.

(2) Epistemologically, it is doubtful whether Wesley may be interpreted in the categories of the *sola scriptura*. This is, of course, much disputed by parties who emphasize the priority of the bible in Wesley's thought against other interpreters of Wesley who emphasize the Wesleyan quadrilateral of the correlation of Scripture, reason, tradition and experience. However one resolves such debates, the fact that they exist testifies to the "catholic" character of Wesley's thought on the one side and the influence of the Enlightenment on the other.

(3) Soteriologically, Wesley's turn to sanctification as the organizing motif of his theology may be interpreted as a reversion to Catholic themes. Certainly many of the implications of this move lead him toward themes that sound "catholic": the appropriation of virtue language, his understanding that righteousness is actually imparted to the Christian in a way foreign to the forensic language of "imputation" of the magisterial Reformation, and so on. A similar way of making the same point is to notice that magisterial protestantism makes "faith" the

<sup>3</sup>Maximin Piette, *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1937).

central theological virtue, while Wesley is very clear that "love" is the central virtue and that faith is instrumental to love. This point is sufficiently important that I will quote directly from Wesley:

. . . faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaiden of love. As glorious and honorable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honor to love alone. Love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the sole end of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. And it will endure when heaven and earth flee away; for 'love' alone 'never faileth'. Faith will totally fail; it will be swallowed up in sight, in the everlasting vision of God. (Sermon 36, "The Law Established by Faith," II, 1)<sup>4</sup>

Wesley makes the same point with other images—that faith is the door or the porch, while the house itself is love, and so forth. Indeed, one does not understand Wesley at all until one grasps the centrality of "love" in his thought—as the character of God in eternity, as the *imago dei* in creation, as lost in the fall, as restored in *regeneration* and sanctification, as the goal of "perfect love" in the Christian life, and as the fundamental characteristic of eternity when the need for faith has passed.

(4) And finally we need to make an explicit contrast between the thought of Wesley and that of Luther. I think it is fair to notice a "disjunctive" element in the thought of Luther that stands opposed to a "conjunctive" tendency in the thought of Wesley. By this I mean that Luther, perhaps in his reaction to catholicism, tends to speak of faith *or* reason, gospel *or* law, scripture *or* tradition, faith *or* works, and so on, while Wesley speaks more naturally of faith *and* reason, gospel *and* law, scripture *and* tradition, faith *and* works, and so on. The same point may be made in another way by noticing that Wesley is able to move from Galatians to James in the New Testament without feeling the tension that caused Luther to appropriate the former as the hermeneutical center of his theology while marginalizing the latter as "a right strawy epistle."

With these comments in the background it may now be possible to hear with new ears a statement from Wesley that picks up many of these themes and hopefully reveals how Wesley should be positioned with regard to them. Those who know only one thing about John Wesley probably know of his "Aldersgate" spiritual experience while hearing read in a Moravian meeting words from Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. Less well-known is Wesley's reaction to Luther

<sup>4</sup>The quotations by Wesley are cited informally and without reference to any particular edition in ways that will allow the citations to be found in various editions of the sermons and journals of Wesley—by sermon number, title and section (in the case of sermons) or by date (in the case of the journals).

when he got around to reading his commentary on Galatians. The following statement from his diary in 1741 (three years after Aldersgate) reveals how far his thought is from at least the Lutheran side of the continental Reformation:

I . . . read over . . . that celebrated book, Martin Luther's Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians. I was utterly ashamed. How have I esteemed this book, only because I heard it so commended by others! Or, at best, because I had read some excellent sentences occasionally quoted from it! But what shall I say, now I judge for myself? Now I see with my own eyes? Why, not only that the author makes nothing out, clears up not one considerable difficulty; that he is quite shallow in his remarks on many passages, and muddy and confused almost on all; but that he is deeply tinctured with mysticism throughout, and hence often dangerously wrong. To instance only one or two points: How does he (almost in the words of Tauler) decry reason, right or wrong, as an irreconcilable enemy to the Gospel of Christ? Whereas, what is reason, (the faculty so called,) but the power of apprehending, judging and discoursing? Which power is not more to be condemned in the gross, than seeing, hearing, or feeling. Again, how blasphemously does he speak of good works and of the law of God; constantly coupling the law with sin, death, hell or the Devil! and teaching that Christ delivers us from them all alike. Whereas, it can no more be proved from Scripture, that "Christ delivers us from the law of God," than he delivers us "from holiness or from Heaven." Here (I apprehend) is the real spring of the ground of the error of the Moravians. They follow Luther for better or for worse. Hence their, "No works; no law; no commandments." But who art thou that "speakest evil of the law, and judgest the law?" (Wesley, *Journal*, Monday, June 15, 1741)

These comments of Wesley anticipate many of the themes which now follow. Let me attempt to unfold the Wesleyan understanding of "Gospel and Law" by providing a series of "thesis statements" with supporting quotations from Wesley that will indicate the major points that need to be made. We do not pursue each of these themes in detail, but together I think that they will indicate the basic shape of Wesley's thought.

(1) It is often assumed that anyone who puts as much weight as Wesley does on works and the law must be slipping into a form of "works righteousness" that qualifies the gratuity of grace and fundamentally compromises the gospel of "salvation by faith." But it was his preaching on "salvation by faith" that got Wesley into much trouble. The collections of the "standard sermons" that have become almost the doctrinal standards of the various strands of Methodism begin with his sermon on "Salvation by Faith" that was preached in St. Mary's of Oxford just a little over two weeks after his Aldersgate experience. Though perhaps still tinged with a Moravianism that he would

later qualify—and still willing to laud Luther as the great champion of this theme, this sermon begins with the following ringing declaration of “salvation by grace”:

All the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favor: his free, undeserved favour, favour altogether undeserved, man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that ‘formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul’, and stamped on that soul the image of God, and ‘put all things under his feet’. The same free grace continues to us, at this day, life and breath, and all things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God’s hand. ‘All our works thou, O God, hast wrought in us.’ These therefore are so many more instances of free mercy: and whatever righteousness may be found in man, this also is the gift of God.

Wesley repeatedly goes on in this sermon and elsewhere to deny the possibility of any form of salvation on the basis of works or of any other human foundation.

(2) But perhaps Wesley’s most characteristic move is to build on this protestant-sounding foundation a catholic doctrine of sainthood, to use the expression of the late Albert Outler, one of the most important of recent interpreters of Wesleyanism. Wesley uses the language of the “imputation” of the “righteousness of Christ” through “faith,” but just as he makes faith instrumental to love, he makes this construct not the essence of “salvation,” but the entrance to it so that the ultimate reality of salvation is to be found in regeneration and sanctification. Another way of making the same point is to notice that Wesley’s understanding of grace is more active and transformatory in character than that of the magisterial reformers and especially that of Luther. Outler spoke of Wesley as having a “therapeutic” doctrine of grace—an understanding of grace that expects the “fixing” of the distortions of the fallen order in a way that picks up the theme of pardon and works it into the system in ways that lead beyond that theme to themes of restoration of the created order.<sup>5</sup> Still another way of making this point or a similar one is to speak of Wesley’s use (like the Pietists before him) of biological metaphors of birth, regeneration, growth, fruits/roots, etc. rather than more forensic images of position or declaration in his understanding of salvation. The fundamental issue for Wesley is life rather than pardon. Thus he can say:

<sup>5</sup>Outler’s important work on the interpretation of Wesley is scattered in various essays, but the kernel of his work may be found in his anthology, *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) and *Theology and the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1975).

It has been frequently supposed that the being born of God was one with the being justified; that the new birth and justification were only different expressions denoting the same thing . . . But though it be allowed that justification and the new birth are in point of time inseparable from each other, yet are they easily distinguished as being not the same, but things of a widely different nature. Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real, change. God in justifying us does something *for* us: in begetting us against he does the work *in* us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children; by the latter our inmost souls are changed. The one restores us to the favor, the other to the image of God. (Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God," 1, 2)

. . . the new birth . . . is that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life: when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is 'created anew in Jesus Christ', when it is 'renewed after the image of God', 'in righteousness and true holiness', when the love of the world is changed into the love of God, pride into humility, passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the 'earthly, sensual, devilish' mind is turned into 'the mind which was in Christ'. This is the nature of the new birth. (Sermon 45, "The New Birth," II, 5)

(3) This consistently twofold character of salvation in Wesley (justification/new birth, justification/sanctification, salvation from the guilt of sin/salvation from the power of sin, what God does for us/what God does in us, and so on) means that he can talk about the law in two different moments of the Christian life. This is perhaps clearest in Wesley's famous sermon "On the Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption." This is a remarkable sermon in several of its key moves. In a manner reminiscent of Søren Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way* and quite unlike much of modern evangelicalism, Wesley suggests that humankind be divided into three rather than two categories. Instead of sinners and saints, Wesley sees three stages: the natural, the legal, and the evangelical. In the first stage one is secure in one's own sleep—blissfully unaware of the issues of sin that become so troublesome in the second stage when one has been "awakened." This is the "legal" stage because it represents the experience "under the law"—the spirit of bondage. In this stage Wesley comes close to the Reformation language of the law as tutor to grace in that the law exposes and drives home our sinfulness. But Wesley differs somewhat in how he moves from this point. He maintains always a positive view of the law of God; for

. . . sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. It came upon me unawares, slew all my hopes, and plainly

showed, in the midst of life I was in death. 'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good': I no longer lay the blame on this, but on the corruption of my own heart. I acknowledge that 'the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.' I now see both the spiritual nature of the law, and my own devilish heart, 'sold under sin', totally enslaved. . . . (Sermon 9, "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption, II, 9)

(4) This brings us more fully to the point of Wesley's consistently positive attitude toward the law. Where other traditions speak of "freedom from the law," Wesley speaks always of "The Law Established Through Faith"—the title he gives to two key sermons. These two sermons follow another on "The Original, Nature, Properties, and Use of the Law." These three sermons are the *locus classicus* for understanding Wesley on the law. It may also be worth noting that these follow, in editions of either the forty-four or the fifty-three "standard" sermons of Wesley, thirteen discourses on the Sermon on the Mount where they seem to be placed deliberately to draw attention to that sermon as "law" to be followed by the Christian. In these sermons Wesley makes a sharp distinction between the ceremonial and the moral law. It is the latter (i.e., the "moral law") that Wesley celebrates and almost hypostasizes in a sense in that the law seems to become for Wesley the "logos" or the fundamental ontological principle of the universe. This is especially clear in the first of these sermons (based on the text in Romans 7:12: "the law is holy"). This law is grounded in eternity—before Moses, Noah, or Enoch—"beyond the foundation of the world." At creation this law is engraved on human hearts by the finger of God. It is revealed more clearly to Moses where it is written on tablets of stone. When we see this law we see that it is "an incorruptible picture of the high and holy one that inhabiteth eternity." It is at times identified in language reminiscent of the "sophia" tradition of wisdom in the Old Testament and also with the "wisdom from above" of the book of James. Wesley speaks of the law as emanation from the essence of God and even drifts toward language that we more naturally use in a Christological context. The law "is 'the streaming forth' or outbeaming 'of his glory, the express image of his person'." Or, "yea, it is the fairest offspring of the Everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of his essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High." Such language has caused such interpreters of Wesley as Kenneth Collins to speak of "Wesley's Platonic Conception of the Moral Law."<sup>6</sup>

(5) With this background we can now understand why Wesley can describe Luther as blasphemous in his treatment of the law. For Wesley the law is the gospel in a very profound sense. In Wesley gos-

<sup>6</sup>Kenneth Collins, "Wesley's Platonic Conception of the Moral Law," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 21 (1986): 116–28.



pel and law are brought together in a way that reminds us of the concept of "Torah" in Judaism at its best: the law is grace and through it we discover the good news of the way life is intended to be lived. In his fifth discourse on the Sermon on the Mount (on the text: "think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.") Wesley is quite explicit and self-conscious in taking this position:

... there is no contrariety at all between the law and the gospel; ... there is no need for the law to pass away in order to the establishing of the gospel. Indeed neither of them supersedes the other, but they agree perfectly well together. Yea, the very same words, considered in different respects, are parts both of the law and the gospel. If they are considered as commandments, they are parts of the law: if as promises, of the gospel. Thus, 'Thou shalt love the Lord the God with all thy heart,' when considered as a commandment, is a branch of the law; when regarded as a promise, is an essential part of the gospel—the gospel being no other than the commands of the law proposed by way of promises. Accordingly poverty of spirit, purity of heart, and whatever else is enjoined in the holy law of God, are no other, when viewed in a gospel light, than so many great and precious promises.

3. There is therefore the closest connection that can be conceived between the law and the gospel. On the one hand the law continually makes way for and points us to the gospel; on the other the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law. ... We may yet further observe that every command in Holy Writ is only a covered promise. (Sermon 25, "Sermon on the Mount, V," II, 2, 3)

This then is at least the basic outline of the understanding of the "law and gospel in the Wesleyan tradition"—and something of an effort to position this understanding in the constellation of Christian traditions, most especially by contrast with the dominant traditions of the continental Reformation, at least on the more Lutheran side. In closing I would like to make a few suggestive points that I will not be able to develop in detail. But I need to make a few comments on the significance of what I have said for the interpretation of evangelicalism in general.

(1) Obviously, from what I have said above, I believe that the Wesleyan tradition has much at stake in those debates that are now revolutionizing our reading of Paul and the New Testament in general. I have in mind those efforts of persons like Krister Stendahl to wrest the New Testament from out from under structures of interpretation dictated by the spiritual struggle of Luther and continued even today in the majority of scholarship, especially that shaped by the German Lutheran experience. More recently, such debates have centered around the efforts of E. P. Sanders to reorient the interpretation of Paul

by his revisionist readings of Palestinian Judaism. At the center of these discussions is the fact that traditional scholarship has not sufficiently accounted for the positive statements that Paul makes about the law, especially in the book of Romans—the texts that Wesley makes the foundation of his theology of the law. This is one of the key points being made by Methodist James Dunn in such essays as “The New Perspective on Paul”<sup>7</sup> and in his recent commentary on Romans. The dust from these debates has not yet settled, but I suspect that, as it does, we shall take Wesleyanism more seriously theologically and find therein some significant clues for understanding both Paul and the gospel itself.

(2) I also find that the more I ponder the nature of “evangelicalism” in our context, the more I am convinced that it must be understood as standing largely in the line of Wesley. By this I mean that contemporary evangelicalism in its dominant “convertive” piety form is not primarily a Reformation product, but a later development with roots in Pietism and Puritanism that flowered in the “evangelical revivals” of the eighteenth century. Most forms of modern evangelicalism that emphasize the “new birth” are characterized by this later development rather than by the subtle dialectic of the Lutheran doctrine of “justification by faith” and the *simul justus et peccator*. If we are inclined to identify evangelicalism, for example, with modern revivalism of the last two centuries, we must notice that the founder of this tradition, Charles Grandison Finney, was characterized by a similar understanding of law (though perhaps a bit more Pelagian in tendency). One has only to notice the thesis expressed in David Weddle’s book *The Law as Gospel: Revival and Reform in the Theology of Charles G. Finney*.<sup>8</sup> It is also becoming increasingly clear that more attention must be paid to the significance of Scottish Common Sense Realism for the interpretation of American evangelicalism. This philosophical school had a tendency to affirm the objective and immutable character of the moral law that was so a part of the ontological structure of reality that it could be discerned universally by common sense. Surely, it is the cumulative effect of such traditions that have given us modern controversies about “moral absolutes” and polemics against “situation ethics.” Or how else am I to explain the many sermons that I grew up under that warned me against various sins which violated the

<sup>7</sup>This essay is now available in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1990). Useful surveys of the issue are John M. G. Barclay, “Paul and the Law: Observations on Some Recent Debates,” *Themelios* 12 (September, 1986): 5–15 and Thomas C. Geer, Jr., “Paul and the Law in Recent Discussion,” *Restoration Quarterly* 31 (1989): 93–107.

<sup>8</sup>David Weddle, *The Law as Gospel: Revival and Reform in the Theology of Charles G. Finney* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1985).

moral law written in my heart—and warned that the pursuit of such would put me at odds with my essential nature.

(3) If such suggestions have any validity, we must rethink the nature of “evangelicalism” as we traditionally interpret it. If the Wesleyan tradition has a determinative role in the shaping of modern “evangelicalism,” then it is not exactly a form of “traditional protestantism.” It is rather a protest and corrective to basic themes of the Reformation rather than a restatement of them. Indeed, if we think of the Reformation and the eighteenth century “evangelical revival” as dialectically related and mutually corrective, we may be able to avoid the “cheap grace” tendencies of the former and the “legalistic” tendencies of the latter. Søren Kierkegaard had much to say about the demonic tendencies that are manifested when correctives are isolated from that which they are intended to correct and made norms by themselves.

(4) If we grasp this dialectical and corrective struggle and notice how it is being played out in history, we might interpret the efforts of the last couple of generations of “evangelical scholarship” to reassert the classical traditions of the Reformation as a corrective to a popular (and populist) “evangelicalism” profoundly shaped by forms of Wesleyanism. Noticing such a dynamic might help explain the fact with which I began this paper—the massive suppression of the Wesleyan tradition in the historical and theological interpretation of modern “evangelicalism.” This suppression has been so massive (no doubt for a variety of reasons) that most interpreters are not even aware of the Wesleyan tradition as a theological option. One of the most egregious illustrations of this is the book by Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum?*<sup>9</sup> In this volume Fuller extends his earlier critique of dispensational hermeneutics to a similar critique of “covenant theology” for their emphasizing the contrast rather than the continuity of “gospel” and “law.” But Fuller offers his solution as a new find, a discovery *de novo*, without any apparent awareness of antecedents to his position like the Wesleyan tradition. I am convinced that we need to reflect on such phenomena more than we do, because they reveal a sociological and cultural determination of our discussions that sometimes prevent us from hearing the gospel in its fullness.

<sup>9</sup>Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).



## THE KEY ROLE OF DANIEL 7

RICHARD D. PATTERSON

PERHAPS the most persistent problem with regard to the unity and composition of the book of Daniel has been the relation of its first six chapters to its latter half.<sup>1</sup> Although several divergent views have been held (particularly as to the age and provenance of chapters 1 and 7<sup>2</sup>), these may presently be reduced to a widely held consensus: “The first six chapters of the book contain material which is older than the later chapters, and this material has been re-edited in Maccabean times to attain a redactional unity with the apocalyptic visions of chs. 7–12.”<sup>3</sup> This study will suggest that chapter 7 functions not only as a hinge chapter that provides unity to the two primary literary genres in Daniel, but plays a key role in the understanding of biblical eschatology.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For a sample of diverse opinions, see O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament An Introduction* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965) 512–19.

<sup>2</sup>Some have argued for these chapters as distinctive compositions, chapter 1 being composed as an introduction to the court tales of 2–6, and chapter 7 being viewed as an independent forerunner to the apocalypses of 8–12. For details, see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 1106–10; J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927) 88–99; W. L. Humphreys, “A Life Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel,” *JBL* 92 (1973): 211–23.

<sup>3</sup>J. J. Collins, “The Court-tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic,” *JBL* 94 (1975): 218; see also P. R. Davies, “Eschatology in the Book of Daniel,” *JSOT* 17 (1980): 33–53. Scholars continue to debate whether one author (see, e.g., H. H. Rowley, in *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* [Rev. ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1965] 249–80) or multiple authorship (see, e.g., H. L. Ginsberg, “The Composition of the Book of Daniel,” *VT* 4 [1954]: 246–75; M. L. Delcor, *Le Livre de Daniel* [SB; Paris: Gabalda, 1971] 10–13) can best account for the final form of the book. A compromise position has recently been put forward by A. A. Di Lella (in L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel* [AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1978] 16) who suggests that an editor-compiler (= the writer of the core apocalypse of chapter 9), utilizing the work of “several like-minded authors” was responsible for the book’s final collection. Although the original edition was written in Aramaic, a translator may be assumed to have rendered 1:1–2:4a; 8–12 into Hebrew and subsequently published the “work in its present form as a single book. The date would be ca. 140 B.C.”

<sup>4</sup>For discussion of hinging in the Scriptures, see R. D. Patterson, “Of Bookends, Hinges, and Hooks: Literary Clues to the Arrangement of Jeremiah’s Prophecies,” *WTJ* 51 (1989): 116–17. For Daniel 7 as a hinge chapter, see J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC;

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DANIEL 7 TO THE STRUCTURE OF DANIEL

The narrative of Daniel 7, though full of complex details, is simply told. At the onset of the reign of Belshazzar, Nabonidus' son,<sup>5</sup> Daniel has a dream consisting of a series of nocturnal visions.<sup>6</sup> Daniel sees a great sea being driven and tossed by the four winds of heaven.<sup>7</sup> As he looks, four great beasts come up out of the sea, the fourth of which is a frightful appearing animal with iron teeth. It also has ten horns among which ultimately another little horn arises, breaking off three of the existing horns. This little horn on the fearsome and dreadful beast has eyes and a mouth like a man and speaks great boastful words. As he looks further, Daniel catches a glimpse of the Ancient of Days seated on his throne before the assembled courts of heaven. The record books of judgment are opened and the awful beast with the boastful little horn is destroyed. Then Daniel sees "One like a Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven" (v. 13—NIV), to whom the Ancient of Days grants an everlasting kingdom and authority, and before whom all men worship.

As the account continues, Daniel, who in the previous court narratives serves as the divine interpreter to the Babylonian court (see 2:25–45; 4:19–27; 5:18–28), is himself overcome by the details of the awesome vision and asks one of the attending angels as to the true meaning of what he has seen. He learns that the four beasts represent a succession of earthly kingdoms that ultimately will be succeeded by that inaugurated by the Most High. Upon further inquiry concerning the fourth beast and the little horn that spoke so boastfully, he learns that these represent the culmination of earthly powers as concentrated in the hands of an evil ruler. This one will gain power through violent means and persecute the saints, enacting oppressive measures aimed at subverting all

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Dallas: Word, 1989) 159. J. F. Walvoord (*Daniel* [Chicago: Moody, 1971] 151) rightly remarks: "Chapter 7 is a high point in revelation in the book of Daniel; and, in some sense, the material before as well as the material which follows pivots upon the detailed revelation of this chapter."

<sup>5</sup>The existence and importance of Belshazzar, once universally denounced by critics as unhistorical, can no longer be doubted. For details, see J. P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Rev. ed.; Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1962) 233–35; G. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Rev. ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1974) 382–83. E. Yamauchi ("The Archaeological Background of Daniel," *BS* 137 [1980]: 6) remarks: "A recent re-examination of all the relevant cuneiform data has helped clarify the chronology . . . the coregency of Nabonidus and Belshazzar should be dated as early as 550 and not just before the fall of Babylon in 539."

<sup>6</sup>E. J. Young (*The Prophecy of Daniel* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977] 141) terms it "a divinely imposed dream."

<sup>7</sup>The term "great sea" is normally assigned to the Mediterranean Sea in the Scriptures: see Goldingay, *Daniel*, 160; L. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973) 180.

forms of traditional law and order. His time of rule, however, will be terminated at the sovereign direction of God who will then institute his rule in the midst of "the people of the Most High" (v. 27—NIV).

The account lays great stress on the dream itself with its fourfold periodization of "beastly" nations and on the culmination of that succession in the activities of a powerful and sinister figure whose defeat brings the process to its consummation in the blessed rule of God amidst his followers. The structure of the narrative may be conveniently outlined as follows: introductory setting (1), vision (2–14), response (15), interpretation (16–27), response (28).<sup>8</sup>

Chapter 7 has rightly been closely linked with the following material in chapters 8–12 for at least two reasons. (1) Like those chapters, chapter 7, while a dream, is also visionary in character, thus adding to a group of texts comprising a unit of "vision reports."<sup>9</sup> Such prophetic pieces often partake of the more frequent "announcements of judgment"<sup>10</sup> and "kingdom oracles" dealing with universal judgment and promises of ultimate blessing.<sup>11</sup> Their distinctive feature, however, is that they are cast in the form of a vision. Such oracles frequently embellish the customary Old Testament eschatological perspective of God's superintending culmination of earth's history with an emphasis on cosmic scope and supernatural beings who play an important part, and on the presence of a heavenly mediator/interpreter who furnishes needed information or interpretation.<sup>12</sup> (2) Much of the material that is sketched in preliminary form in chapter 7 is filled out in the succeeding

<sup>8</sup>E. M. Good ("Apocalyptic as Comedy: The Book of Daniel," *Semeia* 32 [1984]: 57) suggests a chiastic structure to the main material in the vision: A—four beasts (v. 3), B—first three beasts (vv. 4–6), C—fourth beast described (vv. 7–8), D—Ancient of Days + court scene (vv. 9–10), C'—fourth beast killed (v. 11), B'—first three beasts prolonged (v. 12), A'—human figure comes with clouds (vv. 13–14).

<sup>9</sup>On the nature of Old Testament prophecy, see my remarks in *A Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup>See the various discussions in C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, translated by H. C. White (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991) 129–98.

<sup>11</sup>See G. Vos, *Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) 307–18. C. Westermann terms such prophecies "salvation oracles"; see, e.g., *Prophetic Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament*, translated by Keith Crim (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).

<sup>12</sup>The decision as to whether Daniel 7–12 can also be called apocalyptic is not an easy one. Thus, E. Heaton (*Daniel* [TBC; London: SCM, 1967] 34–35) points to the omission of such typical apocalyptic elements as cosmic imagery, great battle scenes, lurid descriptions of the fate of the wicked Gentiles, and highly colored pictures of a final kingdom, a golden age of peace, righteousness, and prosperity centered around a strong Messianic leader. Noting the almost total absence of such typical apocalyptic themes, teachings found in such apocalyptic pieces as I Enoch, the Sibylline Oracles, the Assumption of Moses, and 2 Esdras, Heaton remarks; "What we find in the present work

chapters, thus making it an integral part of the latter half of Daniel. These data are conveniently displayed in Table 1.

Chapter 7 has also been linked closely by some with the court narratives<sup>13</sup> of chapters 1–6.<sup>14</sup> That such a procedure is justified may be

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[Daniel] . . . is not a formal apocalyptic tradition but, rather, a miscellaneous body of prophetic teaching and imagery about the coming kingdom of God.”

Likewise, Davies (“Eschatology,” 34) feels that “the word ‘apocalyptic’ has been detrimental to the Book of Daniel,” not only because the genre itself is ill-defined but because Daniel reflects the eschatological perspective of the court tales of chapters 1–6 as applied to the Maccabean crisis.

On the other hand, scholars such as A. B. Mickelsen (*Daniel and Revelation: Riddles or Realities?* [Nashville: Nelson, 1984] 24–25) and J. J. Collins (*The Apocalyptic Imagination* [New York: Crossroad, 1984] 68–92) defend assigning the term “apocalyptic” to large portions of Daniel. Citing the importance of angelic activity and heavenly mediatorship of revelation in Daniel, as well as the explicit hope of resurrection in chapter 12, Collins (“Apocalyptic Genre and Mythic Allusions in Daniel,” *JSOT* 21 [1981]: 89) suggests that Daniel “has been hindered more fundamentally by the failure of scholarship to examine individual works like Daniel in the context of the genre constituted by the corpus of apocalypses.”

Both schools of interpretation can make their point. Certainly current definitions and descriptions of apocalypse do allow distinctive portions of Daniel 7–12 to be viewed as apocalyptic. If, however, one searches for the over-emphasis on cosmic themes, cataclysmic changes in the physical world and the extreme language so characteristic of later Jewish apocalyptic fervor, it is evident that Daniel uses such things sparingly. In any case, Daniel is more closely tied to mainstream eschatology with its emphasis on a sovereign God’s active superintendence of the details of history so as to bring them to his final purposes. Daniel may, then, perhaps be better set beside such Old Testament passages as Zeph. 1:14–18 as “emergent apocalyptic.” See further my discussion in *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (WEC; Chicago: Moody, 1991) 285–88.

<sup>13</sup>Chapters 1–6 are customarily termed “court tales.” Such stories have as their central plot an account of the heroic exploits of a godly exile in a foreign court. This person’s godly walk and wisdom prove his worth in various tests. He then rises to such personal prominence that he is able to improve the well-being of his people or even effect their deliverance.

These narratives customarily include such elements as: (1) a specific test involving faith, morality, or compromise of covenantal standards, (2) the friendliness of some resident court official, (3) besting the foreigners in contests or conflict, and (4) an unexpected extraordinary resolution to a besetting problem. Typical biblical examples include Daniel (Dan 1–6), Joseph (Gen 37–50), Esther, and, to some extent, Ezra and Nehemiah. Extra-biblical examples may be cited in the apocryphal stories concerning Zerubbabel (I Esdras 3–4), Tobit, and Judith, as well as the Aramaic story of Ahiqar and the Egyptian Tale of Sinuhe.

For details, see Collins, “Court-Tales,” 218–34; J. G. Gammie, “On the Intention and Sources of Daniel I–VI,” *VT* 31 (1981): 282–92; Heaton, *Daniel*, 33–53; and Humphreys, “Life Style,” 211–23. Humphreys divides such stories into two types: the court contest, in which the hero provides the interpretation to a seemingly insoluble problem and the court conflict, in which the hero’s purity is rewarded with deliverance. Humphreys’ twofold categorization is perhaps the simplest way to view the court narratives. According to this arrangement, Daniel 2, 4–5 belong with the first type and Daniel 3, 6, with the second.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, A. Lenglet, “La structure littéraire de Daniel 2–7,” *Biblica* 53 (1972): 169–90; J. Baldwin, *Daniel* (TOTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978) 59–63.



TABLE 1  
*Daniel 7 with "Apocalypse of Gabriel" (Dan. 8-12)*

ELEMENTS	7	8	9	10-12
Subject	4 beasts	2 beasts	70 weeks	3 princes
Vehicle	Dream/vision	Vision	Scrip./Prayer	Revelation
Setting	Dream/Vis. (1)	Vision (1-2)	Study (1-2)	Rev./effect (10:1-3)
Details	Lion (4)		Prayer (3-19)	
	Bear (5)	Ram (3-4)		
	Leopard (6)	He-Goat (5-8a)		
		4 Horns (8b)		
		Little Horn (9-12)		
	4th beast (7)			
	Little horn (8)			
	Consummation (9-14)			
Mediator	Angel (15-16a)	Compl. Vis (13-14)	Gabriel (20-21)	1st Angel vis. (10:4-19)
Interp./	Intro. (16b)	Gabriel (15-18)	Intro. (22-23)	Intro. (10:20-11:2a)
Information	4 beasts (17-18)	Ram (20)	70 weeks (24-27)	Persian Kings (11:2b)
		He-Goat (21)	-Purpose (24)	Mighty King (11:3-4)
		-4 horns (22)	-69 weeks (25)	South vs. North (11:5-20)
		-Little horn (23-25)	Post	N. vicious king (11:21-35)
			69	
	4th beast (19-23)		weeks	
	-10 horns (24a)		Coming ruler (26-27)	Willful king (11:36-45)
	-Little horn (24b-25)			Saints delivered (12:1-3)
	Saints deliv. (26)			
	Final kingdom (27)			
	Closing Formula (28a)	Sealing vision (26)		Sealing scroll (12:4)
Epilogue	Dan. troubled (28b)	Dan. troubled (27)		2d Angel. vis./
				information (12:5-13)

seen not only in the fact that chapter 7 shares the same language (Aramaic) with 2:4b–6:28, but that, as Lenglet observes, Daniel 2–7 “est . . . écrit d’une manière concentrique.”<sup>15</sup> Indeed, its structure is finely balanced, forming a neat chiasmic arrangement of material, chapters 2 and 7 presenting visions of a fourfold periodization of earth’s historical and political succession, chapters 3 and 6 depicting specific adventures (told in characteristic “U shaped” plot) that test the faith of Daniel and his three friends, and chapters 4 and 5 (the centerpiece of the chiasmus) relating details illustrating divine dealings aimed at trying the character of two Babylonian kings.

Structural patterning may also be observed in the balanced progression within the two halves (2–4; 5–7) of the chiasmus. Thus, chapters 2 and 5 relate Daniel’s testing in the midst of the Babylonian wise men, chapters 3 and 6 detail the personal trials of Daniel’s three friends, and chapters 4 and 7 involve elements of personal testimony with regard to the reception and understanding of revelatory dreams. In addition, the close relationship of chapters 4 and 5 with their stress on royal discipline, the fifth chapter utilizing elements narrated in the fourth, has often been noted.<sup>16</sup> Further, the structure of chapter 7 can be seen to bear close affinities with the preceding court narratives, particularly those in chapters 2, 4, and 5. A still further unifying element can be seen in that chapter 7, like chapters 1–6, features a court scene (vv. 9–10, 13–14, 26–27), this one, however, presided over by a Heavenly Sovereign. These data are illustrated in Table 2.

Building on these findings and adding a consideration of the first chapter, an overall view of the structure of the book emerges that yields a distinctive ABA pattern:

- A. Historical Introduction (1) [Hebrew]
- B. Historical Information (2–7) [Aramaic]
- A. Future Information (7, 8–12) [Hebrew]<sup>17</sup>

The importance of this ancient format (observable as early as the Code of Hammurapi<sup>18</sup>) to the unity and composition of Daniel is duly noted by C. H. Gordon:

<sup>15</sup>Lenglet, “La structure,” 188.

<sup>16</sup>Gammie (“Intention and Sources,” 283) calls attention as well to “the extremely important element of ‘prophecy fulfilled’ . . . in chapters iv and v.”

<sup>17</sup>Note that 12:4–13 forms not only a conclusion to the vision report begun in 10:1 but also a concluding summary with instructions that serve, together with chapter 1, to bookend the entire prophecy.



<sup>18</sup>The rendering of the name of the great Mesopotamian lawgiver with a “p” rather than a “b” is now certain, the ambiguous Akkadian syllable sign  (= bi or pi) being uniformly treated in this name as a p in Ugaritic (  ).

TABLE 2  
*Daniel: Overview of 2-7*

		Chapter					
		2 A	3 B	4 C	5 C'	6 B'	7 A'
Subject	4 metals (Future)		Neb's Proclamation (Faith)	Neb's Writing (Character)	Bel's Writing (Character)	Darius' Proclamation (Faith)	4 beasts (Future)
Perspective	1) Test Daniel (vs) Wisemen	2) Trial Furnace		3) Testimony Dream (Past)	1) Test Daniel (vs) Wisemen	2) Trial Lion's den	3) Testimony Dream (Future)
Structure				<i>Epistle</i> Opening			
Setting:	Dream (1-3)	Image and Proclamation (1-7)		(1-3)	Feast (1-6)	Daniel's Promotion (1-3)	Dream (1)
Crisis:	Wisemen & Daniel (4-24)	Accusation of 3 (8-23)		<i>Body<sup>s</sup> (4-36)</i> 1) Problem (4-33) Dream Interpretation Fulfilled	Wisemen & Queen (7-12)	Accusation of Daniel (4-18)	Details (2-14)
Resolution:	Interpretation (25-45)	Deliverance of 3 (24-29)		2) Solved Recovery (34-36)	Interpretation (13-28)	Deliverance of Daniel (19-27)	Interpretation (15-27)
Epilog:	Reward (46-49)	Reward (30)		<i>Closure</i> Praise (37)	Reward & Fulfillment (29-31)	Reward (28)	Perplexity (28)

Hammurapi's Code has a comprehensive literary form. The prologue and epilogue are in poetry, whose form is parallelistic and whose language is archaic. The laws in the middle, however, are in prose, so that the whole composition has a pattern, which we call ABA; A being poetry, B being prose. This has an important bearing upon other oriental compositions including the Bible. . . . Similarly the biblical Book of Daniel begins and ends in Hebrew, though the middle is in Aramaic. The possibility of an intentional ABA structure deserves earnest consideration and should deter us from hastily dissecting the text.<sup>19</sup>

Gordon's remark as to intentionality in the ABA pattern adds to the impression gained by noting the book's structural refinements. The cumulative effect has important implications for the unity and composition of Daniel. Rather than pointing to the unifying work of a late redactor/compiler who stands at the end of a long line of editorial activity, Daniel is best explained as supporting Gooding's contention that "we must take seriously the book's internal proportions, as having been deliberately planned by the author."<sup>20</sup>

The key role of chapter 7 to the book of Daniel is thus readily apparent. Its central location and close correspondence with the two major portions make it evident that Daniel 7 is in many respects the key that unlocks the door to the problem of the unity, as well as the understanding, of the book. Baldwin remarks: "Looked at in relation to the Aramaic section this chapter constitutes the climax, and it is the high point in relation to the whole book; subsequent chapters treat only part of the picture and concentrate on some particular aspect of it."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>C. H. Gordon, *The Ancient Near East* (3d ed.; New York: Norton, 1965) 83–84. ABA structure is, of course, a familiar feature of Old Testament writing style. See W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry* (JSOTS 26; Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1986) 204–7.

<sup>20</sup>D. W. Gooding, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Daniel and Its Implications," *TB* 32 (1981): 68. Gooding's analysis, however, proceeds along more thematic, rather than literary, lines so that his suggested structural arrangement differs significantly from the consensus of Old Testament scholarship.

Authorial intention in the ABA structural pattern would appear to be vindicated further by the witness of Qumran. Contrary to the view of some scholars who hold that the complete Daniel was originally written in Aramaic with sections subsequently translated into Hebrew, manuscripts from both Cave One and Cave Four validate the change from Hebrew to Aramaic at 2:4b and the change from Aramaic to Hebrew at 8:1. Thus, G. Hasel ("New Light on the Book of Daniel from the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Archaeology and Biblical Research* 5 [1992]: 50) remarks: "The Hebrew/Aramaic Masoretic text of the book of Daniel now has stronger support than at any other time in the history of the interpretation of the book of Daniel."

<sup>21</sup>Baldwin, *Daniel*, 137.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DANIEL 7 TO DANIEL'S ESCHATOLOGY

The strategic structural position of chapter 7 provides a key not only to the form of the book but to the understanding of Daniel's eschatology. Together with the bookending chapter of its first part (chapter 2), it gives a picture of earth's political future from Daniel's day onward. As noted above, that prophesied future falls into a four-fold periodization that begins with Babylon (2:36–38) and proceeds with generally deteriorating political cohesiveness but increasing ferocity through two more kingdoms to a fourth era, toward the end of which a fearsome leader arises.<sup>22</sup> During his time, the saints will be sorely oppressed but God will accomplish his defeat and rule through his designated leader who will reign in the midst of the saints forever (7:13–14, 18–27).

This general overview undergirds and circumscribes the further complementary revelations that follow in chapters 8–12.<sup>23</sup> Particularly troublesome to harmonizing the data of those chapters with the basic format of chapters 7 and 2 is the twofold problem of (1) the identification of those kingdoms/eras that succeed Babylon and (2) the understanding of the discussions concerning the little horn and the willful king that figure so prominently in chapters 8 and 11.

As for the former problem, chapter 8, which is set in the third year of Belshazzar, would appear to describe two kingdoms that will succeed Babylon, kingdoms that are identified as Medo-Persia and Greece (vv. 20–21). The vision of this chapter also tells of the rise and fall of Greece's most prominent king (= Alexander the Great), the parceling out of his kingdom after his demise, and the subsequent rise and destruction of a wicked king (= Antiochus Epiphanes) who opposes God's people (vv. 8–12, 22–25).

As for the latter problem, since the prediction concerning the wicked king (= the little horn that grew up on the he goat) at first sight seems to parallel that of the wicked king (= the little horn that grew up on the fearful beast) of chapter 7 (vv. 19–25), the question arises as to whether these two chapters are speaking of the same person. The difficulty in deciding affirmatively for such an identification is that the

<sup>22</sup>The allocating of prophetic history into episodic schemes is well known in the ancient Near East, being attested in the Sibylline Oracles (4:49–101) and Tobit, as well as in Greek, Roman, Persian, and Mesopotamian traditions. For details, see J. Baldwin, "Some Literary Affinities in the Book of Daniel," *TB* 30 (1979): 90–92; *Daniel*, 55; Goldingay, *Daniel*, 40–41; Di Lella, *Daniel*, 29–33; and J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1983) 1:382.

<sup>23</sup>For the juxtapositioning of complementary revelations as a feature of apocalyptic literature, see Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 85–86.

little horn of chapter 7 arises in the era of the fourth kingdom, while that in chapter 8 apparently belongs to the third. To solve that problem, many expositors suggest that the two-horned ram in the vision of chapter 8, representing Media and Persia, should be harmonized with the four kingdom sequence of chapter 7 by taking the ram as symbolizing two successive kingdoms. The resultant four kingdom sequence can therefore be understood as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. Thus, Di Lella remarks:

Whereas in ch. 2 and ch. 7 there is one symbol for the kingdom of the Medes and another for that of the Persians (2:39; 7:5–6), in ch. 8 there is a single symbol, the ram, for both these kingdoms (8:3–4, 20). But this does not mean that the author of ch. 8 is ignorant of the “four kingdom” concept of the rest of the book. On the one hand, both ch. 6 and the Book of Esther treat the Medes and the Persians as kindred peoples in a coalition (Dan 6:9, 13; Esther 1:3; 2:14, 18; etc.); while on the other hand, ch. 8, in which each of the two large horns of the ram symbolizes a separate kingdom (cf. vs. 20), makes a distinction between the “longer and more recent” horn, Persia, and “the other,” Media (vs. 3).<sup>24</sup>

Such a decision, however, runs counter to Daniel’s consistent symbolic scheme. For elsewhere each animal depicts a given kingdom/era and, while the parts of an animal may signify different persons/events/segments within a particular kingdom/era, they never appear to be able to be understood of entirely different kingdom/eras. Further, within the last vision (chapters 10–12), set in the days of the second or Persian kingdom (10:1), attention is focused once again on only the two kingdoms of Persia and Greece (11:2–4). It would appear, then, that while chapter 7 (combined with chapter 2) provides the basic four epoch prophetic framework for the future, the visions of chapters 8 and 11 amplify details relative to the nearer historical scene in the days of the second and third kingdoms.

<sup>24</sup>Di Lella, *Daniel*, 234; see also 212–14. Actually, those who decide for the first and fourth kingdoms as referring to Babylon and Greece respectively are far from unanimous as to the identity of the second and third kingdoms. Goldingay (*Daniel*, 175, 176), sensing the inherent difficulty in the problem and having surveyed various solutions to it, concludes: “It is as certain an exegetical judgment as most that the contextual meaning of Dan 7 is that the first empire is Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon, the fourth is Greece. There is less certainty about the identity of the second and third kingdoms. . . . There is little evidence to go on in identifying the second and third kingdoms, and each interpretation gives a slightly artificial result. This reflects two facts. First, Daniel is not really interested in the second and third kingdoms, and perhaps had no opinion regarding their identity. Second, the four-empire scheme as a whole is more important than the identification of its parts. Dan 7 is applying a well-known scheme to a period that has to begin with the exile and end with the Antiochene crisis.”

The result of these considerations is that the twofold problem can be solved by concluding that (1) the proper identification in the four kingdom periods is Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and a concluding fourth kingdom/era, and (2) the little horn of chapter 8 must "be distinguished from the little horn of chapter 7, which came up among the ten horns of the indescribable beast. Though they have a superficial similarity, there are many differences between them and they do not belong to the same era."<sup>25</sup>

It may be added that the fourth of these kingdoms/eras most likely began with Rome and stretches on to the divinely instituted kingdom.<sup>26</sup> The appearance of the figure of a little horn in both the third and fourth kingdoms indicates that the person involved in the third (unanimously identified as Antiochus Epiphanes) stands either as a type or prophetic precursor to his antitype in the fourth kingdom. Thus, chapter 8 can be viewed as "historically fulfilled in Antiochus, but to varying degrees foreshadowing typically the future world ruler who would dominate the situation at the end of the times of the Gentiles"<sup>27</sup> or by seeing chapter 8 as prophetic fulfillment without consummation. Consistency of approach also predisposes one to treat chapter 11 in similar fashion. Baldwin rightly affirms:

There are reasons for thinking that, although the chapter finds its first fulfillment in the character and reign of Antiochus IV, the matter does not stop there. Notice that (i) there are details which do not apply to Antiochus if our information about him from other sources is accurate. (ii) The emphasis throughout is less on the king's deeds than on his character which prompts his deeds. (iii) The account keeps returning to the persecution which will be directed against the godly people and the covenant. (iv) Throughout the book the proud are manifestly brought low or suddenly cut out of the picture by death. God's sovereign way of

<sup>25</sup>Baldwin, *Daniel*, 24.

<sup>26</sup>The overwhelming consensus of Jewish and Christian interpreters holds to a four kingdom sequence culminating in Rome. See the helpful excursus of C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 245–68.

<sup>27</sup>Walvoord, *Daniel*, 196. Many expositors suggest that chapter 8 prophesies events relative to both Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist. Thus, Wood (*Daniel*, 223) "sees the angel Gabriel as now giving the meaning of the vision by showing, not only the significance involving Antiochus of ancient history, but also that of the one whom Antiochus foreshadowed, the Antichrist of future history. That is, Antiochus' oppression is seen to provide a partial fulfillment of the prophetic vision, but that of the Antichrist the complete fulfillment."

An interesting parallel may be seen in D. L. Turner's conclusion ("The Structure and Sequence of Matthew 24:1–41: Interaction with Evangelical Treatments," *GTJ* 10 [1989]: 16–17) that our Lord's discussion of the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy concerning the abomination of desolation (Matt 24:15–28) relates both to the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem and to the eschatological Antichrist.

bringing this about is a marked emphasis in the case of Nebuchadrezzar, Belshazzar, Alexander and his successors. (v) These rulers become progressively more anti-God as the book draws to its conclusion. (vi) The chapter takes up the point made in 8:17, where the vision was 'for the time of the end'.<sup>28</sup>

One final problem within the book of Daniel has to do with the relation of the framework of chapter 7 to the prophecy of the seventy weeks in 9:24–27. Final interpretation of this passage has eluded the best efforts of expositors of all ages. Indeed, Montgomery calls it the "Dis-mal Swamp of O.T. criticism."<sup>29</sup> The many diverse views and the multifaceted interpretative problems resident in the passage need not be rehearsed here. For our purposes, it can simply be pointed out that by remembering that 9:24–27 is set in a context largely made up of apocalyptic literature and by allowing chapter 7 to exercise its full regulatory constraints on all subsequent chapters in the book, a satisfactory harmonization of all the data in chapters 7–12 (as well as chapter 2) can be achieved.<sup>30</sup> The resultant picture is demonstrated in Table 3.

<sup>28</sup>Baldwin, *Daniel*, 199–200. Many commentators suggest that the shift from Antiochus Epiphanes to the future wicked ruler comes at 11:36. See, e.g., Walvoord, *Daniel*, 270–80; Wood, *Daniel*, 304–14; and R. D. Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (New York: Revell, 1954) 163–71. Culver (167) takes a reverse approach in observing, "So, while I feel that Antiochus' career (chapter 8, 11:21–35) is adumbrative of Antichrist's, it also appears that the prophecy of Antichrist (11:36–45) may be reflected backward to Antiochus. To one acquainted with the technique of the prophets this will not appear strange. It is one of the commonest of phenomena to find events of similar nature, but separated widely in time, united in one prophetic oracle."

<sup>29</sup>Montgomery, *Daniel*, 400. Montgomery concludes his long discussion of the passage (372–401) by affirming: "The trackless wilderness of assumptions and theories in the efforts to obtain an exact chronology fitting into the history of Salvation, after these 2,000 years of infinitely varied interpretations, would seem to preclude any use of the 70 Weeks for the determination of a definite prophetic chronology."

<sup>30</sup>The position taken here takes into account the full weight of the symbolism of the numbers seventy and seven so prevalent in the Old Testament and the intertestamental literature. The apocalyptic nature of this portion of Daniel lends further expectation to a symbolic use of numbers here (and in varying degrees throughout chapters 7–12). See M. S. Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988 reprint) 20–21; D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 195–202; L. Morris, *Apocalyptic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 34–37.

The passage may be conveniently divided into "seven weeks," capped by the coming of Messiah, "sixty-two weeks" of Israelite history, and a final "seventieth week" of great affliction for Israel. This latter "week" is dominated by the appearance of the Antichrist, whose godless and oppressive tactics are terminated when God's decreed end is levied upon him. For a similar division of the seventy weeks, but with different conclusions, see M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 482–87.

The approach suggested here has three benefits. (1) It avoids the problems inherent in finding the seventy weeks of years either as fulfilled in Christ or as punctuated with an



TABLE 3  
*Daniel's Framework for the Future*

Chapters:	2	7	8	9	10-12
Date:	Nebuchadnezzar's 2d year	Belshazzar's 1st year	Belshazzar's 3d year	"Darius" 1st year	Cyrus' 3d year
Kingdoms/Eras			Data/Elements		
Babylon	Head of Gold	Winged Lion			
Medo Persia	Chest of Silver	Bear	Ram w/2 horns	Seven	Add. 4 kings
Greece	Belly/thighs of bronze	Leopard w/4 wings/heads	He goat w/large horn 4 horns appear		Mighty king + successors
(Antiochus Epiphanes)			Little horn	Sevens	King of North
Rome	Legs of Iron feet/toes of iron/clay	Dreadful beast w/10 horns		62 Sevens	
(Antichrist)		Little horn		1 Seven	Willful king
Final Kingdom	Rock cut out of mountain	One like Son of Man, coming with clouds			Resurrection and Felicity

## THE FURTHER SIGNIFICANCE OF DANIEL 7

Because Daniel was an heir to a long tradition of mainstream prophetic activity, with which he often interacted (e.g., cf. Jer. 25:8–14; 29:10–14 with Dan. 9), his own prophetic outlook can be taken as normative when attempting to determine Hebrew eschatological perspective near the end of the Old Testament revelation. Indeed, it must provide the framework for such important prophesied events as the regathering of Israel, the period of Israel's persecution involved in the teachings concerning the Day of the Lord, the great final battles of earth's history, the coming and reign of Messiah, and the everlasting felicity of God's people. The key role of chapter 7, so important to the full teaching of Daniel, thus gains wider significance as an interpretative key for Old Testament eschatology.

The limited corpus of subsequent Old Testament revelation makes specific examples of the use of Daniel 7 by later authors to be scanty at best. The influence of Daniel 7, however, may possibly be felt in Zechariah's report of a night vision (cf. Dan 7:7, 13 with 2:19) featuring the number four (Dan 7:2–3; Zech 1:8; cf. 6:1–8). It is interesting to note that much like Daniel's night vision, which bookends the chiasmatically designed section of Aramaic court narratives, Zechariah's vision reports are arranged in chiastic form. Moreover, much like Daniel (7–12), Zechariah makes great use of apocalyptic and groups his vision reports together anthologically (1–6, 9–12). Zechariah's editorial decision may possibly have been directly influenced by Daniel.<sup>31</sup>

While the unquestioned instances of the continued use of Daniel 7 during the intertestamental era are few (but note such important cases as I Enoch 69:26–71:17; 90:9–13a, 20–27; Sibylline Oracles 3:388–400; Testament of Joseph 19:6–12; IQM 17:6–8),<sup>32</sup> the fact that this chapter provides a quarry from which many exegetical stones have been hewn by writers of the Christian era demonstrates that its influence

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indeterminable gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks for which there is no exegetical justification. (2) It keeps the Jewish perspective in focus. (3) It allows the full weight of biblical evidence and apocalyptic literary interpretation to be felt. The time perspective of Daniel is thus one of chronography, not chronology.

<sup>31</sup>If the proposed Danielic influence on Zechariah is allowable, it further strengthens the contention that apocalyptic had likely already emerged by the days traditionally associated with Daniel, the sixth century B.C. Having arisen out of eschatological prophecy, the apocalyptic form was thus an inner-Jewish development that reached the full status as a genre in the Intertestamental Period. Note (though he assigns a late date to Daniel) the similar concession by D. Aune (*Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983] 112): "Prophecy appears to have gradually merged into apocalyptic. . . . Apocalyptic is therefore an inner-Jewish development."

<sup>32</sup>Many of the themes and images in Daniel 7 do occur often, such as God's fiery throne, the "Holy Ones," "One like a Son of Man," and the ten horns.

must have continued to have been felt.<sup>33</sup> Certainly the Lord Jesus employs it in his Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:29–31; cf. Mark 13:26–27; Luke 21:25–28). Referring to Daniel 7:13–14 and linking it with Zechariah 12:10–12, he points out that these prophecies find their consummation as he, the Son of Man, comes in splendor and power on the clouds of heaven to gather the elect from all quarters, much to the consternation of the unbelievers of earth. In his final appearance before the Sanhedrin (Matt 26:64; cf. Mark 14:62; Luke 22:20), Jesus again draws upon Daniel 7:13, this time combining it with Psalm 110:1. Here he uses the Old Testament to emphasize his rightful place not only as the expected King Messiah, but as the sovereign judge.

It is in the Apocalypse, however, that the weight of Daniel 7 is more keenly felt. In a thorough study of the influence of the book of Daniel upon the book of Revelation, Beale demonstrates that Daniel 7 is the controlling source for large portions of Revelation (e.g., 1:4–7, 11–12; 4:1–5:14 [especially 5:2–14]; 13:1–8, 11–18; 17:5–16a).<sup>34</sup> It is particularly important to note the use and crucial placement of Revelation 13 and 17 in the structure of the book. After the prologue (1:1–8) and section dealing with the seven letter scrolls (1:9–3:22), the majority of the book is devoted to a discussion of the heavenly scroll (4:1–22:5). During the course of heavenly worship (4), a sealed scroll is seen in God's hand that none is found worthy to open except the victorious Lamb (5). Before the scroll can be read, each of the seven seals is opened (6:1–8:1) and seven trumpets are sounded (8:2–11:19). Now the message of the scroll can be received. It is an awesome message of the apparent reign of evil for a period of time, an era in which God's people will be sorely afflicted. Ultimately, however, the Messiah King, Jesus Christ, descends with his armies to defeat and judge the forces of evil, reign in triumph for a thousand years, and then, having put down a last Satanic insurgency, rules over a new heaven and earth.

The record of events on the scroll itself is presented in two stages termed signs, the first depicting general conditions (12–14) and the second describing specific events (15:1–22:5). The material drawn from Daniel 7 figures prominently under each of the signs. Chapter 13 tells of the rise and reign of terror of the Antichrist; chapter 17 identifies the location of his base of operations. In these chapters many of the themes and much of the phraseology of Daniel 7 may be found,

<sup>33</sup>In addition to New Testament examples may be noted Sibylline Oracles 4; Apocalypse of Elijah 2; 5; 2 Esdras 12:10–12; 2 Baruch 39:5–8; 4 Ezra 12:10–39; 13:1–13a; I Enoch 46–47 (though the date is disputed, much as the case of 69:26–71:17).

<sup>34</sup>G. K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (New York: University Press of America, 1984) 154–267. Helpful summaries of Beale's research can be found on pp. 170–77; 202–3; 222–28; 244–48; 265–67.

such as the appearance of a dreadful ten horned beast (Rev 13:1–2; 17:3) who boasts great things and blasphemes God (Rev 13:2, 7, 25; 17:14) and opposes the saints (Rev 13:7; 17:6) and who has supreme authority for three and a half years (Rev 13:5). Noting these and other allusions to Daniel 7, Beale remarks:

These parallels demonstrate a close association between chaps. 13 and 17, and are striking especially because most are the result of Daniel 7 influence. Our proposal that Daniel 7 is the controlling pattern for Revelation 17 receives more support in that chap. 13 exhibits the clearest Danielic *Vorbild* in Revelation (especially in 13:1–8, from which all but one of the above parallels are found).<sup>35</sup>

It is of crucial importance to note that in detailing the events of these future end-time days, John draws upon the material presented under Daniel's predictions relative to the fourth kingdom/era. Thus it may be seen that Daniel's fourth kingdom/era prophesies not of Greece (as suggested by many), which, of course, was past by the time when John wrote the Revelation, but of Rome. However, this era stretches beyond historic Rome through all its successors on to the distant period of the Great Tribulation and beyond. John's use of the material and format of Daniel 7 to portray the events of the future Tribulation Period and following reinforces the view which holds that the deeds first enacted historically under Antiochus Epiphanes will be reenacted in even more savage degree by the Antichrist. Keil rightly observes:

Antiochus, in his conduct towards the Old Testament people of God, is only the type of Antichrist, who will arise out of the ten kingdoms of the fourth world-kingdom (ch. vii.24) and be diverse from them, arrogate to himself the omnipotence which is given to Christ, and in this arrogance will put himself in the place of God.

The sameness of the designation given to both of these adversaries of the people of God, a "*little horn*," not only points to the relation of type and antitype, but also, as Kliefoth has justly remarked, to "intentional and definite" "parallelism between the third world-kingdom (the Macedonian) and the fourth (the Roman)."<sup>36</sup>

The broad use made of Daniel 7 by the extra-biblical authors as well by Jesus and John testifies to its continuing influence and its importance to future expectations. Daniel 7, then, provides an important setting for biblical eschatology.

<sup>35</sup>Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 267.

<sup>36</sup>Keil, *Daniel*, 260–62.

## CONCLUSION

Because all of the Bible is God's inspired objectively verifiable revelation, all of it is important. Nevertheless, it is obvious that certain verses, passages, and books provide distinctive keys to the arrangement and understanding of given portions or of the Scriptures in their entirety.

The seventh chapter of Daniel takes its place among these scriptural keys. Not only is it the key to the structure of the book but it provides the framework by which the prophecies of Daniel may be understood. Further, facets of its eschatology remained normative for both subsequent orthodox Judaism and Christianity. While additional details beyond Daniel's purview have been added in the New Testament revelation, its epochal orientation and predicted events remain as basic tenets of biblical eschatology.

It is, then, a key chapter. As such it provides a meeting place for Jews and Christians, although each may differ on matters of soteriology. For both look forward to that day when after the Tribulation that stands near the end of this age, the Messiah and our Lord shall reign in the midst of his people over a refreshed and glorified earth forever.

I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup>Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 11:15 (NIV).



# “DUBIOUS EVANGELICALISM”? A RESPONSE TO JOHN GERSTNER’S CRITIQUE OF DISPENSATIONALISM<sup>1</sup>

DAVID L. TURNER

## INTRODUCTION

DISTINGUISHED church historian and apologist John Gerstner’s formal entrance into debate with dispensationalists began in 1982 with the publication of his *Primer on Dispensationalism*.<sup>2</sup> Though converted through the witness of a dispensationalist, Gerstner soon afterward began what has become a fifty year career advocating reformed theology. Concern over questions about dispensational antinomianism led to his *Primer*. Now the lordship salvation controversy has rekindled his interest and led to his conviction that there has been no essential change in dispensationalism. According to Gerstner, “Dispensationalism today, as yesterday, is spurious Calvinism and dubious evangelicalism.”<sup>3</sup> To demonstrate this thesis, he surveys the history of dispensationalism in 65 pages. Next he critiques dispensationalism’s philosophy and hermeneutics in 28 pages. The bulk of his book, the remaining 172 pages, addresses dispensational theology.

J. I. Packer, for one, agrees with Gerstner. He praises Gerstner’s “skill and thorough knowledge.” Speaking of a gulf between dispensationalism and Calvinism, Packer applauds Gerstner’s proof that the two systems are “radically opposed.”<sup>4</sup> Along similar lines R. C. Sproul’s foreword lauds Gerstner as a “world-class historian” whose charges

<sup>1</sup>John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1991). Hereafter cited as *WDWT*. For other substantial reviews see R. L. Mayhue, “Who is Wrong? A Review of John Gerstner’s *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 3 (1992) 73–94; T. Wells “*Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism: A Review*,” *Reformation Today* (Jan–Feb 1992) 25–32; J. A. Witmer, “A Review of *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*,” *BSac* 149 (1992) 131–45; 259–76.

<sup>2</sup>John H. Gerstner, *Primer on Dispensationalism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1982).

<sup>3</sup>*WDWT*, 2.

<sup>4</sup>*WDWT*, dust jacket.

are delivered with "pinpoint accuracy." According to Sproul there are only two alternatives. If Gerstner is right, dispensationalism "should be discarded as being a serious deviation from Biblical Christianity," but if he is wrong, "he owes many a profound apology."<sup>5</sup>

Readers should not minimize the seriousness of this book's charges. If Sproul's foreword is correct, dispensationalism is the "majority report" among American evangelicals.<sup>6</sup> And if Gerstner is correct, dispensationalism may not even be worthy of the label "evangelical." Thus Gerstner, along with his two prominent endorsers, evidently believe and charge that the majority of American evangelicals may not be evangelicals at all.

In response to this charge I have first engaged in a running commentary on Gerstner's arguments as he presents them in the book. Then I have synthesized what I believe to be serious weaknesses in the argument. I have attempted to engage Gerstner cordially because I hold him in high regard as a distinguished Christian scholar. This is not a debate to be won at all costs. Rather it is a family discussion in the body of Christ (2 Tim 2:24).

#### RUNNING COMMENTARY

##### *Part One: Historical Sketch of Dispensationalism*

Here four chapters chronicle the historical antecedents of dispensationalism, its early history in England, its development in the U.S.A., and its influence upon reformed churches. The discussion of the question of dispensationalism in the early church rightly points out that dispensationalists have at times overstated their case. But Gerstner seems to weaken his own case by the use of guilt by association (Many heretics were chiliasts.) and by understating the presence of premillennialists in the early church.<sup>7</sup> As the discussion proceeds into the post-reformation period, Gerstner makes three blanket assertions which are at least questionable. He believes that dispensationalists always deny the binding nature of the OT sabbath commandment.<sup>8</sup> He also states that dispensational futurist interpretation of the book of Revelation uniformly takes everything from chapter four to the end of the book as yet to be fulfilled.<sup>9</sup> Third, he asserts that eschatology is not the most important element in dispensationalism.

Chapter two on the British backgrounds of dispensationalism is an unremarkable and unobjectionable sketch of the Plymouth Brethren

<sup>5</sup>WDWT, ix, xi.

<sup>6</sup>WDWT, ix.

<sup>7</sup>WDWT, 9-10. For other examples of guilt by association cf. x, 69, 99.

<sup>8</sup>WDWT, 15.

<sup>9</sup>WDWT, 17.



movement. Gerstner grants that men like J. N. Darby and William Kelly were gifted, but adds that their minds were narrowed by their theological views.<sup>10</sup>

Chapter three addresses dispensationalism in the U.S.A. Here Gerstner begins to be more polemical in emphasis. He remarks that dispensational literature is usually in the form of pamphlets written in “not very profound language.”<sup>11</sup> He is skeptical of what he perceives as the abundant statements in dispensational literature which indicate that Bible study alone led people into dispensationalism.<sup>12</sup> His sarcastic response to a statement by A. C. Gaebelein seems out of place in the context of scholarship, let alone scholarly discussion among evangelicals.<sup>13</sup>

His discussion of recent developments in American dispensationalism focuses on Dallas Seminary, where he finds the appearance of movement away from Scofield and Chafer.<sup>14</sup> However, Zane Hodges’ publications on the gospel are taken as outspoken traditional dispensational counter measures to such a movement. It appears here that Gerstner overestimates the scope and importance of Hodges’ work as it relates to contemporary dispensationalism as a whole. No disrespect to Hodges, but he is not the champion of dispensationalism which Gerstner makes him out to be. Gerstner also observes that many Dallas professors are Dallas graduates, which indicates to him that Dallas is closed to unsafe outside influences.<sup>15</sup> However, the presence of alumni on the faculty of institutions of higher education is certainly not limited to Dallas Seminary. And it might be added that many of those Dallas professors received their terminal degrees from other institutions which are not even remotely dispensational.

Later in this chapter Gerstner alludes to dispensationalism’s teaching on the inviolability of God’s land promises to Israel. Accusing dispensationalists of ignoring “the clear teaching” of the OT that Israel must obey its covenantal requirement of obedience, Gerstner states that the “return of the Jews to Palestine in unbelief hardly fulfills such a Biblical requirement.”<sup>16</sup> Though some sensationalists may have implied this, credible spokesmen for mainstream dispensationalism teach that Israel’s presence in the land must be accompanied by faith in Jesus the Messiah in order for prophecy to reach its goal.

The fourth and last chapter in part one is about dispensationalism’s influence upon reformed churches. Viewing dispensationalism as a

<sup>10</sup>WDWT, 29.

<sup>11</sup>WDWT, 38, 52.

<sup>12</sup>WDWT, 39.

<sup>13</sup>WDWT, 44, n. 19.

<sup>14</sup>WDWT, 47.

<sup>15</sup>WDWT, 47.

<sup>16</sup>WDWT, 55; cf. 183, 207–8.

threat to the reformed faith, Gerstner admits that it infiltrated the reformed community by allying with it against modernism, both in the days of the publication of *The Fundamentals* and more recently in connection with the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Nevertheless, a "dispensational Presbyterian" is a contradiction in terms for Gerstner.<sup>17</sup> Therefore Presbyterians like J. H. Brookes, W. G. Moorehead, D. G. Barnhouse, Wilbur Smith, Carl McIntire, Allan MacRae, and J. M. Boice are either insincere or ignorant of the incompatibility of dispensationalism and reformed confessions of faith. In relating a story about Wilbur Smith and D. G. Barnhouse, Gerstner becomes enmeshed in a contradiction. After stating that dispensationalists believe the Lord's Prayer is not intended for today, he notes that dispensationalists Smith and Barnhouse disagreed on whether it should be recited in church. It would seem that either some dispensationalists do not fit Gerstner's rigid description of dispensationalism or that Gerstner's description is erroneous. Evidently Gerstner is unaware of Martin's article which demonstrated that dispensational views of the Sermon on the Mount (including the Lord's Prayer) cannot be stereotyped.<sup>18</sup>

Dispensationalism and premillennialism are sharply distinguished in Gerstner's discussion: "Dispensationalism is antithetically opposed to premillennialism properly understood. . . . Premillennialism is merely an eschatology while dispensationalism is a theological system which includes 'premillennialism.'" Gerstner is willing to own premillennialism as a viable option for orthodox Christians, but he disowns dispensationalism as a system "in constant deviation from essential historic Christianity."<sup>19</sup>

There are two problems here, the first logical and the second semantical. First, it is hard to understand how the deviant dispensational system can include an orthodox eschatology (which is antithetically opposed to it!) and still be in constant deviation from historic Christianity. Second, it would seem to me that most dispensationalists do view their position as an eschatological view resulting from a hermeneutical approach, not as a comprehensive scheme of systematic theology. No doubt traditional dispensational eschatology is connected with other viewpoints, such as the Israel/Church distinction, but it nevertheless is fundamentally a variation of generic premillennial eschatology. It is a way of construing the biblical theology of progressive revelation. It is more of a hermeneutical approach to scripture than a grid of dogmatic conclusions from scripture. In the U.S.A. dispensationalism flourished across denominational lines through the prophetic

<sup>17</sup>WDWT, 60.

<sup>18</sup>WDWT, 60; cf. 187-88. But see John Martin, "Dispensational Approaches to the Sermon on the Mount," in *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, ed. S. Toussaint and C. Dyer (Chicago: Moody, 1986) 35-48.

<sup>19</sup>WDWT, 68; cf. 105.

conference movement. Today at meetings of dispensational scholars held in connection with the Evangelical Theological Society, many theological systems and denominations are represented. Thus Gerstner's point is dubious at best, and the bulk of his book which addresses dispensationalism as if it were a monolithic comprehensive confessional system is fundamentally flawed.

*Part Two: Philosophy and Hermeneutics*

In this rather brief section of the book Gerstner devotes two chapters to philosophy, apologetics, and hermeneutics. The thesis of these chapters seems to be that "dispensationalism is rather short on theory and long on practice." Nevertheless, Gerstner believes that dispensationalism says far more about hermeneutics than is necessary, raising "a virtual non-issue to a level of prime importance."<sup>20</sup> How dispensationalism can be both short on theory and say too much about hermeneutics is unclear. Gerstner makes no mention of a recent major hermeneutics textbook written by dispensationalist Elliott Johnson.<sup>21</sup>

In the chapter on philosophy Gerstner believes that dispensationalists are less academically inclined than nondispensationalists. He interprets the perceived silence of dispensationalists in this area as an intentional avoidance of this subject.<sup>22</sup> In the area of apologetics Gerstner is aware of Norman Geisler's thomism and John Whitcomb's presuppositionalism. No friend of Cornelius Van Til's presuppositionalism, Gerstner identifies it with fideism and notes that dispensationalists tend not to embrace it. He goes on to say that presuppositionalists are thoroughgoing Calvinists and do not believe that dispensationalists are authentically Calvinistic. Gerstner is evidently unaware of several articles by dispensationalists which support presuppositional apologetics.<sup>23</sup> By his logic his own adherence to non-presuppositional "classical" apologetics is suspect, given his Calvinism.

In the chapter on hermeneutics Gerstner critiques dispensationalism for its insistence that its theology is a product of its hermeneutics, not *vice versa*. He also coins the pejorative term "spoof texting" to describe dispensational hermeneutics.<sup>24</sup> He is particularly critical of dispensationalism's "literal" hermeneutic, its charge that covenantalists

<sup>20</sup>WDWT, 73.

<sup>21</sup>Elliott Johnson, *Expository Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990).

<sup>22</sup>WDWT, 76, 78. Cf. 192 for another unfair accusation that silence amounts to intentional avoidance.

<sup>23</sup>James M. Grier, "The Apologetic Value of the Self Witness of Scripture," *GTJ* 1 (1980) 71–76; David L. Turner, "Cornelius Van Til and Romans 1:18–21," *GTJ* 2 (1981) 45–58; George J. Zemek Jr., "Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense: A Review Article," *GTJ* 7 (1986) 111–23; and Stephen R. Spencer, "Fideism and Presuppositionalism," *GTJ* 8 (1987) 89–99; and "Is Natural Theology Biblical?" *GTJ* 9 (1988) 59–72.

<sup>24</sup>WDWT, 83, 99.

“spiritualize” the Bible, and its distinctive approach to biblical prophecy. He argues that dispensational theology has determined its literal hermeneutic.<sup>25</sup> At this point there is a great deal of truth in Gerstner’s argument. However, what he argues against dispensationalism could just as easily be argued against covenantalism. It is inescapable that one’s theology will influence one’s hermeneutics. This recognition of the reality of the hermeneutical circle (or better, spiral) should cause Gerstner and dispensationalists alike to avoid triumphalistic epithets such as “wooden literalism” and “spiritualizing.” Gerstner evidently is not aware that recent dispensational publications no longer take the hermeneutical tack which he opposes.<sup>26</sup>

### *Part Three: Theology*

In this, the largest section of the book, Gerstner devotes seven chapters to argue that dispensationalism is spurious Calvinism and dubious evangelicalism. Under the heading of spurious Calvinism Gerstner arrays a host of charges reflecting his view that dispensationalism is semi-Pelagian or Arminian in essence. According to him, Calvinism is “consistent Christianity” or “just another name for Christianity.” Therefore evangelical Arminianism is labelled “inconsistent Christianity.”<sup>27</sup> Be that as it may, even more serious are Gerstner’s charges that dispensationalism is “dubious evangelicalism.”<sup>28</sup> Thus dispensationalism, along with Arminianism, may not even be worthy of the label “evangelical.” Gerstner is particularly exercised by the lordship salvation controversy, which he styles as traditional dispensational antinomianism versus inconsistent dispensational advocates of lordship.<sup>29</sup>

According to chapter seven on spurious Calvinism, dispensationalists claim to hold four of the five points of Calvinism but actually hold none of them. Gerstner asserts that dispensationalism “specifically rejects the doctrine of limited atonement.”<sup>30</sup> In response to these assertions two statements can be made. First, there are dispensationalists who would not claim to hold any of the five points of Calvinism; many dispensationalists are unashamedly Arminian in theology. Second, there are certain dispensationalists, myself included, who hold Calvinistic theology, including limited atonement. The upshot of these

<sup>25</sup>WDWT, 87, 98, 101, 200.

<sup>26</sup>David L. Turner, “The Continuity of Scripture and Eschatology: Key Hermeneutical Issues,” *GTJ* 6 (1985) 275–78.

<sup>27</sup>WDWT, 103, 107.

<sup>28</sup>WDWT, 103, 149.

<sup>29</sup>WDWT, 209–59.

<sup>30</sup>WDWT, 105, 118.

two observations is that Gerstner's view of dispensationalism as a monolithic confessional system is mistaken.

Gerstner also seems to think that dispensationalists deny the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin and the spiritual inability which accompanies that imputation.<sup>31</sup> To prove this he puts his own words on the lips of J. D. Pentecost after pedantically dissecting a statement by Pentecost which is capable of being interpreted very differently than Gerstner interprets it.<sup>32</sup> He goes on to assert that dispensationalists do not believe in limited atonement, irresistible grace, or the perseverance of the saints. No doubt there are some dispensationalists who do not hold these doctrines, but it is just as clear that many do.<sup>33</sup>

Gerstner's argument against what he perceives to be dispensationalism reveals some disturbing facts about his own brand of Calvinism. It comes out that Gerstner, against Murray and Stonehouse and Hoekema<sup>34</sup> among others, does not believe in the free offer of the gospel to all people indiscriminately. Instead he holds that the well meant offer of the gospel is given only to the elect, a position outside the mainstream of reformed theology as represented in most confessions and textbooks.<sup>35</sup> He opts for the rigorous supralapsarianism of Herman Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Church instead of the mainstream Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Christian Reformed Church. This fact implicitly weakens Gerstner's argument, since he shows himself to be at odds not only with dispensationalists but with most reformed theologians as well. It is also noteworthy that this indicates that reformed theologians are not in agreement on every point. Nevertheless, Gerstner usually assumes that all dispensationalists agree on every point.

Chapter seven on spurious Calvinism concludes with a table which purportedly contrasts the five points of Calvinism with dispensationalism.<sup>36</sup> At each point dispensationalism is represented as traditional Arminianism. The table reads much like a summary of the debate of the remonstrants with the reformed theologians at the famed

<sup>31</sup>WDWT, 108–9.

<sup>32</sup>WDWT, 109–10.

<sup>33</sup>E.g., on the matter of the imputation of Adam's sin see Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary, 1947) 2.296–315; Charles M. Horne, *Salvation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971) 10; and Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* (Chicago: Moody, 1972) 111–12.

<sup>34</sup>John Murray and Ned Stonehouse, *The Free Offer of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Lewis J. Grotenhuis, n.d.). This study was presented as a committee report to the Fifteenth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1948. Cf. Anthony Hoekema's discussion of the gospel call in *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 68–79.

<sup>35</sup>WDWT, 119, 27–31; 67, 77.

<sup>36</sup>WDWT, 147.

Synod of Dort in the Netherlands in 1618–19. No doubt some who hold dispensational eschatology hold Arminian soteriology. However, speaking as one who has studied at two dispensational institutions and who has taught at three such institutions, I have never been taught and have never myself taught (1) that people are able of themselves to receive the gospel offer, (2) that election is based on foreseen faith, (3) that people of themselves choose to believe in Christ, and that (4) the “old nature” is unaffected by the new nature and continues to operate sinfully until death. I have been taught but have not myself taught that the atonement was designed to save every person. Many dispensationalists do prefer to call themselves “four point Calvinists” because of their reluctance to accept limited atonement. So in this area alone Gerstner avoids caricaturization. But on the other four points misrepresentation has occurred. Gerstner fails to demonstrate that dispensationalism is essentially Arminian. Be that as it may, it must also be said that the larger issue is whether dispensationalism is a theological system or an eschatology. Gerstner believes that dispensationalism is an Arminian theological system. I would argue rather that dispensationalism is a type of premillennial eschatology which is held by Arminians and Calvinists alike.

Chapters eight, nine, and ten argue as a unit that dispensationalism denies the gospel by its teaching on dispensations, its view of the kingdom offer to Israel, and its view of Israel and the Church. Gerstner believes that dispensationalism is in blatant opposition to the gospel.<sup>37</sup> He makes it quite clear that in his view dispensationalism “has departed from Christianity. . . . cannot be called Christian. . . . is a cult. . . . It is impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the situation.”<sup>38</sup> True, Gerstner puts all these charges in a conditional mode—if dispensationalism has done what Gerstner charges it has done, it has departed from Christianity, etc. But there is no doubt that Gerstner believes that dispensationalism has actually done what he accuses it of doing and thus has actually departed from Christianity. Why else would it be “impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the situation”?

Chapter eight addresses the question of the definition of a dispensation. The heart of Gerstner’s argument seems to run like this: despite disclaimers by dispensationalists, their system introduces multiple ways of salvation into biblical theology.<sup>39</sup> Their protests to the contrary aside, they do not really believe that the Old Testament saints were saved by faith in Jesus Christ whom they anticipated.<sup>40</sup> In all of

<sup>37</sup>WDWT, 181.

<sup>38</sup>WDWT, 150.

<sup>39</sup>WDWT, 150–51.

<sup>40</sup>WDWT, 168–69.

this Gerstner apparently is unaware that Ryrie's modification of Scofield's definition of a dispensation moves from a temporal orientation toward a stewardship orientation.<sup>41</sup> Reacting to the classic view of a dispensation as a time period in which a test occurs, Gerstner objects that this implies the possibility of successfully passing the test and achieving salvation by a means other than the finished work of Christ.<sup>42</sup> No doubt this objection has some force against the classic Scofieldian position, but many no longer hold that position. It would also appear that the objection is just as forceful against classic covenant theology's covenant of works, in which it was possible for Adam's representative obedience to be imputed to Adam's posterity if Adam successfully passed a period of probation.

Chapter nine addresses dispensationalism's view of the kingdom offer to Israel, arguing in essence that if it had been accepted, Jesus would not have had to die on the cross. In this chapter a number of misconceptions surface. The first is that all dispensationalists hold to such a kingdom offer. Gerstner is evidently unaware that some dispensationalists do not support such a kingdom offer. Another misconception concerns the supposed distinction between the Matthean expression "kingdom of heaven" and the kingdom of God. Gerstner asserts that all dispensationalists make such a distinction, but this is not the case. He is also incorrect when he asserts that all other exegetes view the terms as synonymous; there are non-dispensational exegetes who maintain a distinction between the two expressions.<sup>43</sup> Another misconception concerns the parenthetical nature of the church age or dispensation of grace as a time period totally unforeseen by the Old Testament. Not all dispensationalists have held this and many today do not hold it.<sup>44</sup> A final misconception is Gerstner's characterization of Hal Lindsey and Billy Graham as credible spokesmen for mainline dispensationalism.<sup>45</sup> Though both of these persons are prominent popularizers of eschatology, it is doubtful that their eschatological views

<sup>41</sup>Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965) 29–33.

<sup>42</sup>WDWT, 155.

<sup>43</sup>WDWT, 172. But see Clarence Mason, *Prophetic Problems with Alternate Solutions* (Chicago: Moody, 1973) 102–3; E. Sauer, *Triumph*, 23 n. 1; and S. D. Toussaint, "The Kingdom and Matthew's Gospel," in *Essays in Honor of Pentecost*, 23. D. A. Carson in "Matthew," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 8.100, cites nondispensationalist M. Pamment as one who sees a distinction in her study "The Kingdom of Heaven in the First Gospel," *NTS* 27 (1980–81) 211–32. Gerstner later (174) admits some dispensationalists do not distinguish between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>44</sup>WDWT, 172. See e.g. Erich Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity* (London: Paternoster, 1957) 166; and Robert Saucy, "Contemporary Dispensational Thought," *TSFBull* 7.4 (1984) 10–11.

<sup>45</sup>WDWT, 174–75.

converge and that their views should be considered as representative in a scholarly discussion of dispensationalism.

It is noteworthy that in chapter nine Gerstner addresses the comparison of the dispensational kingdom offer with the covenantal Adamic administration or covenant of works. He denies the force of this *tu quoque* argument by analogy, asserting that God could not have honored his offer of the kingdom to Israel but could have honored his promise to give Adam life. But why these situations are not analogous is unclear; evidently in both scenarios salvation hypothetically could have been achieved apart from the finished work of Jesus Christ.<sup>46</sup>

Chapter ten addresses the traditional dispensational distinction between Israel and the Church as two peoples of God. No doubt this is clearly taught by Darby, Scofield, and others. However, Gerstner pays little attention to the fact that this distinction has been nuanced if not denied at least since Robert Saucy in 1971.<sup>47</sup> He states dogmatically that dispensationalists see Israel and the Church as having separate eternal destinies, evidently unaware of W. Robert Cook's assertions to the contrary.<sup>48</sup> Once again he brings up the mistaken notion that all dispensationalists see the Sermon on the Mount as law for Israel, not as an ethic for the Church.<sup>49</sup>

Also in this chapter Gerstner declares his own position on Israel and the Church. It is his view that they are identical.<sup>50</sup> This position is just as far from Paul's teaching in Romans 11 and Ephesians 2 as is the separation argued in classic dispensationalism. Finally, Gerstner's view that in Ephesians 2:20 the prophets are Old Testament prophets would not be acceptable even to all covenantal scholars.<sup>51</sup> I would not accept the Darby/Scofield view which over stresses the distinction between Israel and the Church, but Gerstner's antithetical approach which identifies the two is hardly more adequate.

Chapters eleven, twelve, and thirteen function as a unit which critiques dispensational antinomianism. It should be remembered that this is the issue which evidently rankles Gerstner the most.<sup>52</sup> My own view of sanctification and the perseverance of the saints is similar to Gerstner's, and I am as concerned as he is about Hodges' and Ryrie's views of discipleship.<sup>53</sup> However, I believe Gerstner incorrectly equates Ryrie's

<sup>46</sup>See Turner, "Continuity of Scripture," 285-86.

<sup>47</sup>WDWT, 208.

<sup>48</sup>WDWT, 185; cf. W. R. Cook, *The Theology of John* (Chicago: Moody, 1975) 167-68, 226-27, n. 27.

<sup>49</sup>WDWT, 187-88. But see Martin's work cited in note 18.

<sup>50</sup>WDWT, 194-95, 207.

<sup>51</sup>WDWT, 206. Cf. e.g. W. Hendriksen, *Exposition of Ephesians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967) 142.

<sup>52</sup>WDWT, 1.

<sup>53</sup>David L. Turner, Review of *Five Views of Sanctification*, GTJ 10 (1989) 94-98.



and Hodges' views. Ryrie seems to place more emphasis on perseverance than Hodges does. At any rate, I do not object to Gerstner's concerns in this area, though I do object to the pervasive meanness of the material. There is an antinomian taint in some dispensational literature, and this has come to the fore recently in the Lordship salvation controversy. But here again Gerstner's attempt to condemn all dispensationalism as a theological system<sup>54</sup> fails, since this controversy is among dispensationalists who disagree with each other. John MacArthur and Zane Hodges both hold a dispensational premillennial eschatology, but their respective views of salvation and sanctification diverge widely. It is not unusual to find in dispensationally oriented publications authors who support both of these positions.<sup>55</sup> If indeed "Scofield and his followers exercise a kind of papal infallibilism" with the result that American dispensationalism "is still essentially Scofieldian" it is passing strange that such a controversy exists.<sup>56</sup> It is also quite surprising to see a reformed theologian like Gerstner dismissing dispensationalism's prominence as "due to an accident of history."<sup>57</sup> It would seem to be more in keeping with reformed theology to speak of dispensationalism's success as a matter of divine providence rather than as an accident of history.

Another of Gerstner's major charges is rendered dubious by this discussion of antinomianism. It is the charge that dispensationalism is essentially an Arminian system. If that were the case, there would be little controversy over lordship salvation. The so called "carnal Christians" of the non-lordship position would be viewed as backsliders who have lost their salvation. Arminianism and antinomianism seem to be at opposite ends of the theological spectrum.

#### SYNTHESIS OF MAJOR PROBLEMS

Having completed the running commentary of interaction with Gerstner's arguments, I now present five major reasons for my view that his work is fundamentally flawed.

First, Gerstner's approach may be faulted on logical grounds. His book is filled with hasty generalizations which comprehensively sweep aside all dispensationalists. But these generalizations are built on critiques of individuals who do not represent contemporary dispensationalism. At times these individuals are nonrepresentative because their views are outdated. Historical development has occurred. At other times Gerstner cites unpublished sources or rather obscure individuals whose views

<sup>54</sup>WDWT, 209.

<sup>55</sup>See e.g., H. A. Kent's lengthy and sympathetic review, "The Gospel According to Jesus: A Review Article," *GTJ* 10 (1989) 67-77.

<sup>56</sup>WDWT, 252-53.

<sup>57</sup>WDWT, 252.

may tend to be idiosyncratic. The result is inadequate induction which does not support the global deductions about all dispensationalists.

Second, Gerstner seems to lack a truly historical perspective. He does not allow for historical development in dispensationalism. Nor does he seem to acknowledge that reformed theology has its own developmental history. Apparently he views reformed systematic theology as tantamount to the Bible in authority, not as a noble and largely successful but nevertheless human effort to articulate biblical truth. He equates Calvinism with biblical Christianity. But which Calvinism? Calvin's? Beza's? Owen's? Edwards's? Hodge's? Warfield's? Murray's? Gerstner's?! His theology is certainly *reformata* but his approach to history neglects the crucial *et semper reformanda* aspect. Here it is particularly unfortunate that he does not interact substantially with Blaising's *BSac* articles on development in orthodox theology.<sup>58</sup>

A third area of major disagreement is Gerstner's insistence that dispensationalism is not merely an eschatology like premillennialism but a theological system which has an eschatology. This view of dispensationalism as a theological monolith will not stand the scrutiny of comprehensive examination. From the outset there has been disagreement among dispensationalists. Those who hold dispensational eschatology will be found in many confessional soteriological and ecclesiastical circles, from reformed, as Gerstner grudgingly admits, to charismatic.<sup>59</sup> One is reminded that G. N. H. Peters, and J. A. Seiss, whose writings were influential in early dispensationalism, were Lutherans. The early ultradispensationalist E. W. Bullinger was an Anglican. It is noteworthy that two of the most prominent dispensational educational institutions, Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary, are interdenominational. In a recent summer doctrine class I taught at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary the students present represented such varied backgrounds as Assemblies of God, Baptist, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of Christ, Plymouth Brethren, and Wesleyan. There were many spirited discussions as we surveyed pneumatology, soteriology, and ecclesiology, but there was general agreement when we came to eschatology.

Fourth, it appears that in crucial areas Gerstner is much more familiar with classic dispensational sources than with contemporary dispensational sources. Substantive interaction occurs mainly with Darby, Scofield, Chafer, and Ryrie. This tendency counters Gerstner's statements that he has examined current dispensational sources<sup>60</sup> and the glowing remarks of Sproul's foreword about Gerstner's careful

<sup>58</sup>C. Blaising, "Doctrinal Development in Orthodoxy" and "Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *BSac* 145 (1988) 133-40, 254-80.

<sup>59</sup>See the 1991 dispensational study group paper by Douglas Oss, "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism within the Pentecostal Tradition," available from Prof. Darrell Bock at Dallas Theological Seminary.

<sup>60</sup>*WDWT*, 2-3, 72, 169, 261 etc.

research and precise targeting of the issues.<sup>61</sup> To some extent this is the fault of contemporary dispensationalists, who have not widely published their views. The lack of contemporary dispensational literature will be alleviated with the publication of *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: The Search for Definition*.<sup>62</sup>

But there are several sources already available which Gerstner does not discuss at any length if he mentions them at all. Several such studies have already been mentioned. Here Radmacher's article on dispensational eschatology is relevant.<sup>63</sup> Ken Barker's and Carl Hoch's *JETS* articles on false discontinuities between the testaments and Jew-Gentile relationships come to mind,<sup>64</sup> as well as the articles by Saucy in *TSFBull* and *CTR*.<sup>65</sup> Homer Kent's study of the new covenant and the church affirms one new covenant in distinction from the position of many early dispensationalists.<sup>66</sup> Craig Blaising's articles in *BSac* and John Martin's study of dispensational approaches to the Sermon on the Mount have already been mentioned. My own studies of dispensational versus covenantal hermeneutics and Matthew 24 address several of the issues which trouble Gerstner.<sup>67</sup> The writings of Erich Sauer present a strand of dispensationalism emphasizing continuity in biblical theology, but Gerstner is apparently unfamiliar with these writings.<sup>68</sup> The recent *Festschrift* in honor of S. Lewis Johnson addresses many of these issues from both dispensational and covenantal perspectives,<sup>69</sup> but it goes unmentioned in Gerstner's book. Even the "ultradispensational" movement which Gerstner wrongly styles as consistent dispensationalism has come a long way since J. C. O'Hair and Cornelius Stam. Gerstner does not discuss the more recent *A Dispensational Theology* by Charles F. Baker<sup>70</sup> and

<sup>61</sup>WDWT, ix.

<sup>62</sup>C. Blaising and D. Bock, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).

<sup>63</sup>Earl D. Radmacher, "The Current Status of Dispensationalism and its Eschatology," in *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology*, ed. K. Kantzer and S. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 163–76.

<sup>64</sup>Kenneth L. Barker, "False Discontinuities Between the Testaments," *JETS* 25 (1982) 3–16; Carl B. Hoch Jr., "The Significance of the *sun*-Compounds for Jew-Gentile Relationships in the body of Christ," *JETS* 25 (1982) 175–83.

<sup>65</sup>Robert Saucy, "Contemporary Dispensational Thought" and "Dispensationalism and the Salvation of the Kingdom," *TSFBull* 7.4 (1984) 10–11 and 7.5 (1984) 6–7; and "The Crucial Issue between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theological Systems," *CTR* 1 (1986) 149–65.

<sup>66</sup>Homer A. Kent, "The New Covenant and the Church," *GTJ* 6 (1985) 289–98.

<sup>67</sup>David Turner, "The Structure and Sequence of Matthew 24:1–41: Interaction with Evangelical Treatments," *GTJ* 10 (1989) 3–27.

<sup>68</sup>Erich Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity* etc.

<sup>69</sup>John Feinberg, ed. *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988).

<sup>70</sup>Charles F. Baker, *A Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College, 1971).

he evidently is not aware that the old Milwaukee Bible College has developed into Grace Bible College in Grand Rapids, MI.

Gerstner is evidently unaware of the work of the Dispensational Study Group of the Evangelical Theological Society. This group has met in conjunction with the annual ETS meeting since 1985 and has enjoyed cordial relations with several reformed scholars who were invited participants. Papers from these meetings have been widely circulated and some have been published.<sup>71</sup> Others are available from professor Darrell Bock at Dallas Theological Seminary.

The fifth and final major problem with Gerstner's study is the spirit in which it is written. At times the language and tone of the book is sarcastic, arrogant, and demeaning. Earnest theological debate is fine, but not rhetoric which slurs fellow imagers of God in God's new creation. It is especially disturbing that respected theologians J. I. Packer and R. C. Sproul have endorsed this diatribe. Sadly, this book is a throw-back to earlier days where there was frequently more heat than light produced in this type of discussion. And certainly dispensationalists have been just as guilty as covenantalists of incendiary tactics. But there seems to be a different spirit now, one of irenic yet earnest interaction.<sup>72</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

According to Gerstner, all dispensationalists are characterized by the following positions: They do not believe in any of the five points of Calvinism. They do not believe in the continuing relevance of the sabbath. They do not believe that anything beyond Revelation 4 has yet been fulfilled. They do not believe in praying the Lord's prayer. They do not believe that the Old Testament saints were regenerate. They do not believe that the kingdom offered to Israel by Jesus was spiritual. They do not equate the kingdom of heaven with the kingdom of God. And they do not believe that becoming a Christian necessarily results in a change of lifestyle.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup>Ronald Clutter, "The Dispensational Study Group: an Introduction," *GTJ* 10 (1989) 123-24. Clutter's introduction precedes a dialogue between covenantalist Vern Poythress and dispensationalist Paul Karleen, pp. 125-64.

<sup>72</sup>Here one thinks of Vern Poythress's *Understanding Dispensationalists* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987). Nevertheless other current books are less irenic and essentially repeat old charges: G. Bahnsen and K. Gentry, *House Divided: The Break-up of Dispensational Theology*, Tyler, TX: ICE, 1989); and C. Crenshaw and G. Gunn, *Dispensationalism Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow* (Memphis: Footstool, 1989 rev. ed.). These covenantalist works are joined by the dispensational work of R. Showers, *There Really is a Difference! A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel, 1990).

<sup>73</sup>WDWT, 2, 17, 25, 60, 90, 105, 132, 147, 171-72, 233.

If this is the case, I have a problem. I have been taught in two dispensational institutions. And I have taught in three such institutions. Yet I believe in all of the above positions which according to Gerstner I must not believe. So I have a problem. Maybe I am not a dispensationalist after all! But maybe Gerstner is the one who has the problem. Maybe dispensationalism is not a rigid monolith of confessional Arminian solidarity. Maybe it is only a recent eschatological innovation which stands upon the inviolability of God's covenant promises to Israel and eagerly expects the imminent return of Christ to consummate those promises. Maybe. . . .<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup>Three current major studies should be consulted by anyone who wishes to understand the current status of dispensationalism. Reference has already been made to Blaising and Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*. In this work ten dispensationalists present current perspectives from biblical theology and there are three responses from prominent non-dispensationalists. See also D. K. Campbell and J. L. Townsend, eds. *A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus* (Chicago: Moody, 1992). This work addresses premillennialism in general from a biblical theology perspective but nearly all of the fourteen contributors would want to be identified as dispensationalists. Expected in 1993 is R. L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan). Saucy has been a major voice in current dispensationalism. Among his propositions are two prominent departures from classic dispensationalism. He argues that the fulfillment of OT prophecy has already begun in the current age of the church and that the church is in continuity with the OT messianic program rather than an unrelated mystery parenthesis. These points are made in the Fall/Winter 1992 Zondervan Academic and Professional book catalog.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*God With Us: A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, by Christoph Barth. Edited by G. W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991. Pp. 403. Cloth.

Christoph Barth, the second son of Karl Barth, devoted a significant part of his life to the theological education of Indonesians. For two decades this volume has been widely used as a textbook in Indonesia, in expanded form. Barth's death forestalled his translating his writings into English. Through the efforts of Geoffrey Bromiley and Barth's widow this abridged English version is now available to the West, posthumously.

The author's approach to the subject reflects his commitment to "listening to the text"—a commitment which does not always guide the systematic theology technique. Obviously oriented more toward biblical theology, Barth has "patiently allowed the Old Testament to surface many of its own concerns, issues and emphases." This results in the identification of nine theological issues, which constitute the book's nine chapters: God created heaven and earth; God chose the fathers of Israel; God brought Israel out of Egypt; God led His people through the wilderness; God revealed Himself at Sinai; God granted Israel the land of Canaan; God raised up kings in Israel; God chose Jerusalem; God sent His prophets. He arrived at these as the significant issues of the Old Testament on the basis of two criteria: [1] they have "significant resonance in the OT literature," [p. 6], [2] they "appear as items in the confessional summaries of history in the OT" [pp. 5, 7]. The use of such criteria in "doing theology" demonstrates Barth's predisposition to the text.

Provocative in certain respects because of Barth's selections and methods, *God with Us* engages the reader in the contemplation of elements of divine activity that are frequently passed over as commonplace. The chapter titles and the respective discussions combine to remind the reader constantly that the Old Testament is much more than a series of interesting stories; indeed, it is a theological presentation of *divine, revelatory activity*. Furthermore, in a rather straightforward manner, the writer makes the point that God's activity, as encountered in the Old Testament, was concentrated upon Israel and her ancestors. This latter point, however, does not lead to a bifurcation between the "testaments;" the author's discussions demonstrate his devotion the unity of scripture.

An impressive characteristic of the book is the writer's ability to correlate and integrate biblical data—legitimately. This is true both with respect to the assimilation of the scriptural witness to each of the subjects and with the demonstration of the interrelationships of those predominant themes. In a convincing manner, Barth develops the validity of his nine theological discussions as foundational to a perceptive comprehension of the Old Testament's theology. For this reason, the book is appropriately subtitled, "A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament."

Certain omissions from Barth's schema are curious. Although he occasionally alludes to God's dealings with the nations, the subject is not discussed in a direct way. Most likely this disregard is to be explained by Barth's point that God's activity was primarily directed toward Israel. Nevertheless, the subject does have "significant resonance" in the Old Testament, and is one of the critical issues which argues for continuity between the "old" and "new" testaments. The absence of any substantive discussion of Genesis 3 and the impact of sin and death upon mankind creates another lacuna in Barth's work. Moreover, the relationship between God and Israel, as presented in the Old Testament, was the outworking of the divine intention to address the Genesis 3 situation.

Chapters 7 and 9 address God's provision of kings and prophets, respectively; this is not to be faulted. However, Deuteronomy 16–18 includes judges and priests among the covenant functionaries. Barth's fullest discussion of priests ["Installing priests for the ministry of reconciliation," pp. 152–58] is included in Chapter 5: "God Revealed Himself at Sinai." Although priests are not as prominent in the narrative of the Former Prophets as are kings or prophets, they are, nevertheless, crucial to the theological interpretation there presented. The importance of the priest's role in the covenant community is also reflected in their inclusion in prophetic indictments of the covenant leaders [cf. Jer. 2:8, 26]. That God raised up "delivering judges" [cf. Judges 4:4; 10:1] for Israel over a period of about 300 years lends some stature to their role in the nation's history also. Barth's work would be strengthened by appropriate discussions of these roles along with kings and prophets.

These deficiencies notwithstanding, the volume offers its readers a challenging, insightful and therefore refreshing alternative. Not intended to replace the works of Eichrodt, von Rad and others, this volume will stand along side of them and make a contribution.

JOHN I. LAWLOR  
BAPTIST BIBLE SEMINARY

*Let Justice Roll Down: The Old Testament, Ethics, and Christian Life*, by Bruce C. Birch. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991. Pp. 357. Paper.

The book's title advertises accurately the author's agenda. He argues incisively that since the Old Testament is scripture of the church, Christian ethics must be rooted in its theology. He reflects an appropriate concern that the modern church reclaims this often misunderstood, often neglected collection of sacred writings as its own—not just Israel's. Convinced that the Old Testament speaks to twentieth-century concerns of the church, Birch deftly demonstrates that the will, character and activity of God offer the foundation of Christian ethics in the Old Testament, not the character and activity of man.

After an introductory section in which he discusses his approach (Part 1: "Method and Approach"), the author directs the reader's attention to "creator and Creation." Obviously these are the first matters presented in the Old Testament; however, the point that Birch is concerned to make is that the Old Testa-



ment portrayal of Creator and creation must be the starting point in formulating ethics.

Through a series of chapters which trace the history and nature of God's dealings with Abraham and his descendants from the Abrahamic covenant to the return from Babylonian exile, the author consistently calls attention to the will, character and activity of God. In this way the reader is regularly reminded of the theocentric (in contrast to anthropocentric) nature of the Old Testament.

A final discussion of "Wisdom and Morality" focuses attention on the Wisdom tradition of ancient Israel and its unique contribution to Old Testament scripture. Wisdom's influence in the formulation of one's ethics is based on wisdom's penchant for creation theology and the attribution of creation to Israel's God.

Two factors tend to detract from the overall impact of the book. First, Birch appears to operate with a predisposition toward the Documentary Hypothesis. It is obvious, however, that he recognizes its current diminished role in Old Testament studies, and reflects a sensitivity to the influence of canonical studies. Consequently, it is not the "driving force" behind his analysis. Second, the author's view of Biblical authority is understood not as "... a property inherent in the Bible itself . . . ;" rather, authority "... is the recognition of the Christian community over centuries of experience that the Scripture is a source of empowerment for its life in the world." (34)

These two fundamental flaws notwithstanding (for a generation to which the past tends to be less important than "getting on with the future," to which history is less attractive than eschatology), Birch's examination of the Old Testament offers a needed reminder: What God has done for His people in the past should serve as the basis on which the present is lived and the eyeglasses through which the future is anticipated. Speaking of the Exodus event, he observes that it "did not stay tied to its historical moorings in the past. It became the lens through which generation after generation read its own experience." (130)

JOHN I. LAWLOR  
BAPTIST BIBLE SEMINARY

*Jeremiah 26-52: To Build, To Plant*, by Walter Brueggemann. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. xi + 298. Paper.

This volume, like the first (*Jeremiah 1-15: To Pluck Up, To Tear Down*. Eerdmans, 1988), takes its cue from Jeremiah 1:10. Indeed, Brueggemann repeatedly returns to its theme (see, e.g., pp. 3, 39, 40-43, 67, 178, 206-8). Brueggemann likewise continues his basic socio-literary hermeneutical approach. In so doing, his evaluation of the situation behind the existence of a community that is strongly divided over covenantal and noncovenantal approaches to life. The former is represented by the Jeremiah tradition, the latter by the Jerusalem establishment that holds to a royal-priestly ideology.

The social situation can be discerned in three pivotal themes that have been presented in the chapters covered in vol. 1 and that reappear in the material represented by this volume: (1) Israel's covenant with Yahweh, which is

preserved in the memories and mandates of the Sinai tradition, together with its blessings and cursings (see, e.g., chaps. 26; 27–28; 34:8–22; 44:1–14), (2) the pathos of Yahweh, a factor that ensures the Lord's continuing relation with His disobedient people (see, e.g., chaps. 30–33; pp. 41–43, 58–78, 91–103), and (3) the royal-temple ideology of the king and temple priests, which taught that God's promise of His continuing residence in Jerusalem guaranteed the existence of the monarchy, the temple worship, and the city itself (see, e.g., chaps. 36–45; pp. 121–28, 154–57). Underlying the whole is the threat of the imminent demise of Jerusalem due to the nation's failure to follow the standards of covenant-Torah. Despite the claims of the establishment, Jerusalem must and will fall. God's judgment, however, will eventuate in His free gift of a new community (33:1–11), to whose grateful followers will be given a gracious new covenant (31:31–34).

Brueggemann's commitment to literary concerns is seen in his competent handling of rhetorical devices throughout the book. Among his many observations of a literary nature (in addition to the usual attention given to metaphor, simile, and repetition, etc.) may be noted such features as the "rich variety of literary forms" in chap. 30 (p. 58), the careful use of complicated rhetorical devices in 34:12–16 (p. 110) and restrained understatement in 39:1–10 (p. 157), the catechetical-like creation of a "pentologue" warning against "accommodation to the values of the dominant society" (pp. 112–13), near apocalyptic rhetoric in chaps. 50–51 (pp. 257, 275), and the utilization of the "if-then" style (pp. 6, 105, 177–81).

Brueggemann also pays attention to structural matters. Thus, he suggests the use of bracketing via chaps. 36 and 45 (pp. 121, 204), by means of the careful placement of 1:10 and 46:1 (p. 216), and through the balancing of the Baruch and Seriah narratives (pp. 281–82). He notes the employment of poetic anticipatory formulae in 51:47–58 (p. 278) and occasional instances of chiasmus (e.g., 44:2–6; 51:41–44). In addition, Brueggemann isolates several key sub-themes that are interlaced throughout these chapters such as God's sovereignty (pp. 5, 86, 139, 145–46, 247, 258, 269, 293), especially in His utilization of Babylon as an instrument of divine judgment (see especially chaps. 46–51 and the remarks on pp. 256–57), and the necessity of the exile (see, e.g., pp. 29, 30, 39, 45, 59, 87–88, 92, 179, 183–84, 186, 290, 293). He calls attention to the motifs of the Good Shepherd, as seen in God's concern for the exiles (chaps. 40–41) and Jeremiah's pastoral care (chap. 29), and the important wedding motif in 33:10–11 (pp. 96–97). Brueggemann also notes a concern for scrolls in these chapters (pp. 129, 137–38, 280–83).

Through all of this Brueggemann largely subordinates historical-critical concerns, opting rather for a "close" reading of the text that enables the canonical Jeremiah to "speak" to its interpreters. Thus, with regard to the material in chaps. 30–33 he remarks, "Historical criticism, in my judgment, has worked too hard at relating such promises to specific historical situations, seeking to explain the text in terms of context." There can be little doubt that judged upon its own merits the book has accomplished its purposes well. Brueggemann has carried through his basic hermeneutical approach with remarkable consistency and with fine rhetorical skill. Certainly all of his readers will be challenged by his reminder that they need to submit themselves and their life situation to the

scriptural text so as to receive "the miracle of forgiveness . . . and to take from it a new, regenerated life" (p. 73).

Nevertheless, one may feel some hesitancy in a wholesale adoption of his conclusions. Thus, Brueggemann's basic threefold hermeneutical position may better be reduced to two, since the Lord's "pathos" is already resident in the mandates of covenant-Torah (see, e.g., Exod. 19–20; Lev. 26; Deut. 27–30). One may also take issue with his treatment of chap. 25 as something unusual and unexpected. Indeed, much as Brueggemann himself notes with regard to chap. 45 (see p. 210), chaps 25, 36, and 45 appear to serve as hinge chapters, partaking of the contexts that surround them while bookending large sections of material ([25], 26–35, [36], 37–44, [45]). A hint as to their deliberate placement may well lie in the fact that all three have the same dating. As well, it would seem that because Brueggemann is dealing with the canonical text, he could have shown more effectively the skillfully deployed verbal and thematic hooks that link the various units and subunits of Jeremiah together. One may also differ with his handling of the arrangement of chaps. 46–51, which appear to follow the customary prophetic procedure (cf. Ezek. 25–32; Amos 1:3–2:3; Zeph. 2:4–15) of being arranged in geographic orientation, Jeremiah 46:1–49:27 dealing with the nations adjacent to Israel and 49:28–51:58 relating to Babylon and its surrounding nations.

Many readers will doubtless feel uncomfortable with several of Brueggemann's theological and historical conclusions. For example, Brueggemann suggests late "redactional shaping" (p. 163) in several places. Thus, chaps. 24 and 29 "likely reflect a later traditioning process in a subsequent generation of exiles" (p. 30). He also proposes that the "theological import" of the Oracles against the Nations (46–51) is "congenial" to "Deuteronomic" theological outlook (p. 258), that 51:59–64 is "a redactional piece that is concerned with the canonical shaping of the book of Jeremiah" (p. 281), and that chap. 52 has undergone "a complex editorial process" (p. 286). Brueggemann's suggested historical setting for several contexts may be problematical such as the exilic setting of 33:17–18, which promises Davidic continuity on the throne, a "guarantee" that Brueggemann finds "strikingly peculiar in the tradition of Jeremiah" (p. 99), as well as his minimizing of the historicity of certain narratives (see, e.g., pp. 124, 200, 204–5).

Some of his interpretative conclusions may likewise be found offensive, particularly those concerning Baruch. Thus he suggests that Baruch, "perhaps the leader of the symbol of the pro-Babylonian community of Jewish exiles," was "the generator of the ideology placed in the mouth of the prophet" (p. 126) in 43:1–3 and that "the name 'Baruch' may also have come in this material to be a cipher for all that body of opinion and all those persons who championed a pro-Babylonian view of the crisis in Jerusalem. Thus Baruch may be a tag-word for all those 'rightminded' people who with Jeremiah equated the purpose of Yahweh with the oppression of Babylon. This is not to deny that Baruch is a person, but to suggest that he is a representative person" (p. 205). Equally troublesome may be the thought that the Oracles against the Nations "emerged in the midst of liturgic celebrations of the sovereignty of Yahweh, and served to voice the claim that God's sovereign rule extended not simply over Israel but over all peoples" (p. 209), or that the argument that rival claims concerning

Israel's God and the queen of heaven are equally good is "not wrong" but "terribly innocent" in that it "does not understand the linkage, explicit at least since Karl Marx, that every theological claim carries with it a socioeconomic claim" (p. 203), or that the fleeing exiles flight to Egypt (43:1-7) was "not only a defeat for Jeremiah," but "an awesome defeat for the God whose work has begun in an escape from Egypt" (p. 188). Of questionable application, assuredly, is Brueggemann's assertion concerning 50:17-20 that Israel's political life, lived under the threat and reality of Assyria and Babylon, is as a sheep to a lion, "much like the relation of Lithuania to the Soviet Union or the relation of Nicaragua to the United States" (pp. 263-64).

In sum, Brueggemann has offered a commentary that demonstrates a thorough knowledge of scholarly opinion on the book of Jeremiah, carries out faithfully and with great consistency the author's own hermeneutical stance, and reflects well the goals of the series in general. While most of the conclusions reached will find a ready appreciation in the wider Christian church, some of them will need to be weighed carefully by the evangelical community.

RICHARD D. PATTERSON

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch*, by Duane Garrett. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. 273. Paper.

The recent work by Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary's professor of Hebrew and Old Testament studies provides an erudite, but readable, proposal concerning the use of sources in the composition of Genesis. This is a question which, because of the Documentary Hypothesis of Graf-Wellhausen, *et. al.*, has been largely avoided by evangelicals.

In Part 1 ["The Higher Criticism of Genesis"] Garrett sets the stage for his later proposals through a brief, but poignant, treatment of the Documentary Hypothesis, a balanced discussion of Form Criticism and Tradition Criticism and a thought-provoking examination of Mosaic authorship and historical reliability. Concerning the Documentary Hypothesis, Garrett concludes that "as a starting point for continued research" it "is dead." Garrett points out the inadequacies of Form Criticism when applied appropriately, and offers some guidelines for its use. Undoubtedly some readers will have difficulty with his discussion of Mosaic authorship and historical reliability, which begins with the point that "the author of the Book of Genesis remains anonymous," although he embraces the view that Moses was "primarily responsible for the writing of the Pentateuch." Nevertheless, Garrett makes the point that affirmation of Mosaic authorship does not answer the questions concerning sources. Here he asserts that "[o]nly a limited amount of the text should be assumed to be visionary in origin," and makes the important point that "[n]o analogy exists in the Bible . . . for historical narrative having its source in direct revelation." Although he sees Moses as the principal author of Genesis, he argues that a post-Mosaic redaction was necessary in order to "make it intelligible to a later generation of readers."

In Part 2 ["The Structure and Sources of Genesis"] Garrett distinguishes among the various types of sources employed in the composition of Genesis. The discussion begins with a proposal of four-stage development of the text: [1] initial recollection and transmission, [2] reduction of these stories to writing and the pre-Mosaic redaction of the unstructured oral sources into complex literary units, [3] Mosaic redaction, [4] post-Mosaic redaction. The first stage, according to Garrett, was patriarchal; this involved recounting the stories of their lives to their children, but also passing down any written materials in their possession. This stage involved oral transmission, although Garrett is reluctant to allow for more than 100 years. The second stage involved the redaction of the various stories into complex narrative form and preservation in written form. The Mosaic redaction gave Genesis its present form and most of its present content. Garrett refers to this stage as "Urgenesis." The post-Mosaic redaction gave Genesis its present shape. Such a reconstruction is certainly reasonable, but at the same time hypothetical—a point which Garrett recognizes.

The decipherment of *toledoth* sources and narrative sources is important for the first stage of transmission; the former preserves family genealogy, the later preserves the experiences of the patriarchs and their immediate families. Making up the latter category, Garrett proposes, are "Ancestor Epics," "Negotiation Tales," "Gospel," and "Migration Epics." The author's discussion of each is arresting and prompts further thought, although at times his description of the conventions of a genre lack the support of comparative ancient Near Eastern materials.

Because Garrett's serious interaction with the narratives of Genesis is quite evident in Part 2, the reader is led to an enhanced perception of the significance found in the the content, structure and intent of these narratives. Consequently, even if the author's reconstruction is unacceptable—in part or in full—it is still profitable to read carefully.

Part 3 ["The Authorship and Composition of Genesis"] offers engaging propositions concerning the Mosaic redaction of Genesis 1 and the possible association between the Israelite priesthood and the tradents of the Genesis sources. Concerning the former, Garrett suggests that the heptadic structure [particularly the 6 + 1] of Genesis 1 identifies it as a genre unique to Biblical literature. Parallels are to be found only in Revelation 6:1–8:1 [seals], 8:2–11:19 [trumpets] and 16:1–21 [bowls]; like these Revelation parallels, Genesis 1:1–2:3 is visionary. Not only does the visionary nature and the [6+1] heptadic structure of these passages argue for intended correlation; Genesis presents the initiation of the world and its history while Revelation offers the heavenly view of the culmination of human history.

Garrett proposes that the Levites functioned as scribes, teachers and "quasi-priests" prior to the exodus, and that they were active in preserving the patriarchal traditions and teaching them to the Israelite community. By the time of the exodus they were already involved in other priestly functions as well, on the basis of tradition. Their role in the golden calf incident was the impetus for their being given responsibility for the care and transportation of the tent of meeting.

Although it is not the main thesis of the book, Garrett sees "alienation" as the theme of Genesis [Chapter 12: "Memories of a Wandering People"].

Unquestionably, "alienation" is encountered with regularity in the Genesis narrative; but that it is the theme of the book is not a settled issue. In this reviewer's judgment it might better be understood as having the status of "subtheme," or perhaps "motif."

Two appendices [A: "The Question of Inspiration," and B: "A Critique of Three Recent Hypotheses of Pentateuchal Origins"] accompany the main three-part discussion. Appendix A, although brief, addresses a point that naturally arises from such an investigation. Without "sacrificing" anything by way of this important doctrine, Garrett, forces the reader to consider the likelihood that compilers along with the "great writers" were carried along by the Holy Spirit in the great enterprise of revelation/preservation.

The implications of this book reach beyond the study of Genesis, to other historical narrative oriented books of the Old Testament [Former Prophets and Chronicles]. Much of Garrett's writing is hypothetical; yet it is a book which deserves both reading and response. As this takes place refining will certainly follow. The question of the use of sources by what Garrett refers to as the "great writers" is one which needs serious, studied conservative evangelical attention. Garrett has produced a volume that boldly addresses a valid question; a volume which motivates the reader to contemplate both the question and Garrett's proposed answer. All serious students and teachers of Genesis should carefully read this book.

JOHN I. LAWLOR  
BAPTIST BIBLE SEMINARY

*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, by Victor P. Hamilton. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990. Pp. 522. Cloth.

Victor Hamilton has contributed a significant work to the study of Genesis. Amidst the plethora of commentaries on the first book of the Bible, Hamilton's analysis and exposition provide a presentation that is solidly conservative and honest with language, history, and critical studies.

In the traditional format of NICOT, Hamilton's introduction deals first with the title of the book. In this discussion he aptly points out the "origins" theology of Genesis, yet he appropriately observes that transcendent to all origins is God: "He is one without *rē'šīt* (beginning) or *ʿaḥ'rīt* (end)" (p. 2).

He then discusses at some length the book's structure based on the *ʿēlleh tōl' dōt* ("these are the generations of") formula. He argues that this phrase serves throughout the book as a superscription for what follows, including 2:4a as a superscription for 2:4b-5:26.

Next, the composition and authorship of the book comes under scrutiny. He traces the history of interpretation from the classical form of the Wellhausen Documentary Hypothesis to the more recent contributions and revisions by Van Seters, Rendtorff, Kikawada, Rendsburg, Tengstrom and others. He concludes his presentation with surveys of the approaches of Kitchen and Harrison. His concise critiques and reviews of the various approaches give helpful perspective to the whole discussion and show thorough awareness of the issues.

Hamilton concludes that the search for the authorship and mode of composition of Genesis is an "exercise in futility" (p. 38). He suggests that a conservative view of Genesis is not necessarily tied in with Mosaic authorship, since most conservative scholars would recognize post-Mosaic updates in the text. However, he points out that there is a strong trend to acknowledge an essential unity to the book. It was refreshing to read a commentary on Genesis that addressed the book as a canonical unity—a book that has theological and textual integrity as it stands. Throughout the commentary itself Hamilton polemicalizes for the book's unity (e.g., pp. 119, 167, 170, 376).

Hamilton then discusses the theology of the book. He appropriately emphasizes the fundamental theme of the promises of God which cannot be aborted (p. 46). In spite of foibles and failures of the human recipients and progenitors of promise (including Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), "the voice of grace and promise is not "muted" (p. 52). The theology of the book is "declaratory, promissory, and eschatological" (p. 47). Hamilton develops well the notion of the theological movement from God's dealing with the families of the earth (Gen. 1–11) to his focus on the chosen family (Gen. 12–50), and the redemptive role of the latter for the former.

Next, Hamilton spends several pages dealing with some of the traditional problems in the book—the "days" of Genesis 1, the mythical interpretation of Genesis 1–11, the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, and the influence of pagan religion on the faith of the patriarchs. He maintains that the "days" of Genesis 1 are normal solar days. He argues, however, that 1:1–2:3 is highly literary in its design, as well as theological and polemical in its intent. He demonstrates that while Genesis 1–11 may be debated as to its factuality, it is not mythical in the classic sense of what the mythopoeic world view perceives (cf. pp. 162 for commentary development). He suggests that the historicity of the patriarchal narratives is a critical concern, and significantly impacts the biblical message of redemption begun in Abraham and climaxed in Jesus Christ. Finally, he argues that the religion of the patriarchs, while certainly influenced in its form by surrounding religions, is unique in its perception of God as one who elects, promises, is mobile and is intensely relational with His called ones.

Hamilton then briefly discusses canonicity and text. He observes that the canonicity of Genesis has never been in serious dispute, and the Hebrew text is well intact.

A helpful bibliography concludes the introduction.

The balance of the commentary is an exposition of the text of Genesis 1:17 (chapters 18–50 are to follow in another volume). He provides his own translation with appropriate notes (lexical, grammatical, text critical, etc.) explaining the reasons for his renderings (note the fascinating suggestion of anacoluthon in Gen 3:22, p. 208, n. 2).

The text of Genesis 1–17 is explicated paragraph by paragraph with careful textual and interpretive observations and comments. The commentary is replete with insightful and balanced remarks. The discussion of Esau's *minhâ* as a cereal offering (p. 223), and the top of the tower of Babel ironically described as needing God to "*come down* to see it" (p. 354), are two of many comments particularly well received. Hamilton demonstrates great familiarity with the available primary and secondary ancient Near East materials, and expends great

effort in bringing these resources to bear on the text of Genesis in both comparative and contrastive ways. His numerous footnotes are wide in scope.

At the end of each larger unit, he attempts to develop the reading of the material by New Testament authors. This unique feature is apparently an attempt to have a contribution from OT scholarship to the discussion of the use of the OT in the NT from a strongly inductive approach. The concept is commendable, but the remarks are usually quite cursory, and perhaps suffer accordingly. How significant they will be in the ongoing broader discussion of how these OT texts are used in the NT is uncertain. The remark that Paul was "history's all-time male chauvinist" (p. 182, n. 2) is rather inappropriate. He does demonstrate a delightful sense of humour throughout, which adds texture to the commentary.

While there are always many interpretative matters to quibble about in a commentary such as this, one concern deserves comment. Hamilton's presentation of authorship and composition is in many senses applauded. Yet, the danger here is that Hamilton minimizes the impact of the message(s) for an original audience. When this happens, the understanding of textual structuring and inclusions/exclusions is also minimized, and even skewed. As is well understood in rhetorical and literary criticism, no text stands outside of a historical context of composition or authorial intent/audience reception.

While Hamilton does refer to an original audience (e.g., pp. 262, 270, 468), it seems that he has not integrated this discussion thoroughly enough. On several occasions, an understanding of an original Mosaic audience, or at least an OT theocratic audience (even post-exilic, per a final canonical form), may have shaped the commentary on these texts somewhat differently. Perhaps his wondering at why certain details are included and omitted in the account of the construction of Noah's ark may be answered by reflecting on the concerns of a receptor community. The remark that "nowhere in ch. 6 does God evaluate Noah's character. That is done by the narrator. . . . The Lord's own statement will come in 7:1" is to misunderstand the theological and polemical intent of the entire book, right down to the original author's framing and structuring accounts and speeches for audience impact. The commentary often seems suspended above original historical settings for its theological and polemical impact (cf. p. 346 for an excellent theological note which is also seemingly suspended in this way).

On the other hand, Hamilton is to be commended for seeking to explicate the book apart from a single generation composition and reading. All too often conservative scholars fail to recognize the continuing scribal activity in the biblical text, an activity that both preserved and revised the text for the sake of contemporary audiences.

The indexes of authors, Hebrew words, and Scripture references at the end of the commentary are well done in the NICOT tradition. Hamilton's commentary will find a significant place among the resources of every student of Genesis. The editorial decision to terminate the first volume at chapter 17 hurts the discussion of the Terah *tôl'qôl*. The publication of chapters 18–50 in the early summer of 1993 is eagerly awaited.

DAVID G. BARKER  
LONDON BAPTIST SEMINARY



*Understand the Book of Amos: Basic Issues in Current Interpretations*, by Gerhard F. Hasel. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. Pp. 171. Paper.

The Book of Amos continues to receive a great deal of attention in OT scholarship. Within the past five years several major commentaries on Amos have appeared (e.g., Andersen and Freedman, Finley, Hays, Paul, Smith, Soggin, and Stuart), not to mention the numerous monographs and periodical articles published in recent years. According to Hasel, scholars have produced more than 800 publications on Amos since 1969 (p. 14). The sheer volume of these scholarly works attests to the book's importance and relevance.

The appearance of so many scholarly works, which represent diverse critical approaches and a wide variety of interpretations, calls for a synthesis which surveys and evaluates recent interpretive developments. Hasel, who is well-known for his incisive and helpful surveys of OT and NT theology, has answered this call, providing those who study Amos with a useful introductory handbook which is both informative and provocative.

After surveying the major stages in the interpretation of Amos over the last century, Hasel discusses recent interpretations of the prophet's background, mission, and message. He addresses all of the major issues which have perplexed scholars, including, among others, the prophet's intellectual background, social criticism, and eschatology, as well as the book's composition and the literary role of its oracles against the nations and hymnic doxologies. In each case Hasel demonstrates a thorough familiarity with the literature, including the most recent commentaries and specialized studies, though of necessity his surveys are somewhat selective. While being well-researched, balanced and fair, the discussions are not purely descriptive. Hasel also attempts to identify trends, raises questions which still need to be answered, and, in many cases, offers useful critiques of various views. One only wishes that the evaluations were more extensive and in-depth. The text of the book could be doubled in length and still serve as a concise and useable introduction.

Hasel observes that many recent Amos studies move away from traditional diachronic approaches (form and redaction criticism) toward synchronic literary approaches which focus on the text's canonical form and message, rather than its alleged redactional layers. As Hasel states, "The diachronic approach will continue to attract some scholars, but it is no longer at the cutting edge of research" (p. 99). Surely this is a welcome trend for evangelicals, many of whom have questioned the legitimacy of the redactional approach all along.

Perhaps the book's concluding (and longest) chapter, in which Hasel addresses the issue of Amos's eschatology, is the most helpful. The author discusses the conditionality/unconditionality of Amos's message of judgment, the prophet's use of the "day of the Lord" and remnant motifs, and the authenticity of the concluding salvation prophecy (9:11–15). Hasel's final paragraph (pp. 119–20) is an especially well-balanced and perceptive statement of Amos's eschatology which harmonizes nicely the book's varied and at times seemingly contradictory themes. Hasel suggests (1) that Amos's proclamation of the "day of the Lord" was eschatological in scope, (2) that the prophesied end of the Northern Kingdom was "not an absolute end," but also made room for the preservation of a remnant of faith, and (3) that Amos was also a prophet

of "eschatological hope" who looked "forward to a successful future" for God's reunited people.

Another of the book's commendable features is its extensive bibliography (pp. 121-66), which contains over 1000 entries and supplements Adrian van der Wal's *Amos: A Classified Bibliography* (1986) by including over 350 publications not found in the latter volume.

ROBERT B. CHISHOLM  
DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary*, by J. J. M. Roberts. The Old Testament Library. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1991. Pp. 223. Cloth.

Contributors to the volumes in the Old Testament Library commentary series introduce each biblical book and divide it into sections for commentary. Each section contains a fresh translation, technical notes (especially lexical, grammatical, and text-critical observations), a general summary of the meaning, and a verse-by-verse analysis. This overall format makes the contributions quite useful for a variety of audience levels. Readers with at least a minimal exposure to Hebrew would profit the most from them, though the fact that the writers transliterate and translate all of the Hebrew makes these volumes helpful for a much wider readership. The scholars who are participating in the project are generally noted for their expertise in modern critical methods (e.g., literary criticism, form criticism, etc.), and the conclusion about such matters will not always be acceptable to evangelicals.

J. J. M. Roberts makes an excellent contribution to this series with his volume on Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah where his strengths lie in historical and theological analysis. For an example of theological acumen, consider this statement on Nahum's emphasis on the vengeance of the Lord:

The rule of Yahweh will not allow the oppressors to go unpunished. One should beware of any bogus morality that dismisses vengeance as both inappropriate to humans and unworthy of God. Such a view simply betrays a glaring absence of the most elementary sense of justice. While the desire to see vengeance done can be twisted and corrupted like any other human desire, it arises out of a sense of justice, and vengeance cannot be discarded without discarding the concern for justice as well. (p. 49)

Robert speaks further about the relationship between God's love and His judgment: "The God of the cross remains an awe-inspiring, devouring fire (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 10:26-31; 12:29). One cannot treat him lightly. God's love is an expression of strength, not weakness" (p. 50).

With regard to critical issues, Roberts takes a moderate view. He accepts the essential unity of all three prophetic books and argues in favor of the traditional authorship by the prophets themselves. Roberts sometimes conjectures that isolated verses or phrases are "glosses" (explanations inserted at a later period). His attitude to the reality of prophecy can be illustrated by where he

places Nahum in history. While he is unwilling to ascribe any concrete detail to the fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy (cf. p. 66), he does recognize that Nahum predicts the fall of Nineveh some 20–30 years before it happens. Roberts does not, however, disclose his view as to why Nahum was able to do that.

Roberts makes some extreme statements about the form critical method of dividing a book into its basic units of interpretation (pp. 10–11), apparently advising the reader that the overall context of a prophetic book does not count for much in the process of interpretation. The way in which Roberts actually interprets his three prophets, however, tempers the force of his advice. Habakkuk he finds exceptional: "... unlike the typical prophetic book, these oracles have been arranged in the book of Habakkuk to develop a coherent, sequentially developed argument that extends through the whole book and to which each individual oracle contributes its part" (p. 81). It might be said that Roberts has done his best work in Habakkuk. But even for Nahum and Zephaniah, Roberts often finds connections between the individual oracles.

With regard to textual criticism Roberts also takes a moderate approach. He is not by any means slavishly bound to the Masoretic Text. He reconstructs a partial alphabetic acrostic for Nahum 1:1–8 and offers numerous variant readings throughout the text of all three prophets. Roberts is usually careful to base his variants on solid evidence (e.g., the LXX or the Dead Sea Scrolls), though, and his constant reference to the versions and other Hebrew manuscripts also forms a strong point of his commentary. This is not to say that Roberts does not sometimes abandon the MT too quickly. The commentaries on Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah by R. Patterson (Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary, 1991) and O. P. Robertson (NICOT, 1990) can serve as a check.

To give some idea of the flavor of Roberts's work, his discussion about Habakkuk 2:4, for which he offers the following translation: "Now the faint-hearted, his soul will not walk in it,/ But the righteous person will live by its faithfulness" may serve as an example. The detailed notes show a combination of conjectural emendation (*ʿāp lô* instead of *ʿuppēlā*) and interpretation of the MT (taking *yāšērā* as "to walk straight" instead of "be upright" and *bô* as "in it" instead of "in him"). This means, according to Roberts, that the fainthearted will fail to trust in the vision that God plans to reveal to Habakkuk, whereas the righteous person will live because of the trustworthiness of that vision. The vision itself can be found in Habakkuk 3:3–15, a description of "God's march to Palestine from his ancient home in the southern mountains" (p. 151). Roberts succeeds in giving an original and provocative interpretation, and it deserves careful consideration by all students of Habakkuk. Lest it should be too hastily concluded that Roberts's analysis does not square with NT interpretations (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38), he justifies the "slight shift of meaning" found there: "Nonetheless, the appropriate human response to the trustworthiness of the vision is to believe it and live in a way that reflects that faith" (p. 111).

The comments on Zephaniah also contain many good observations, but Robert fails to deal adequately with the universality of judgment in the coming "day of the Lord." For example, he translates "land" instead of "earth" at 1:18 and discounts 2:11 as an "isolated and apparently misplaced fragment" which may not belong to Zephaniah (p. 201). Also, his analysis is guided by the

assumption that for Zephaniah, the "day of the Lord" is "a day of judgment on God's own people" (p. 164). The oracles against the nations (Zeph 2:14-15) all deal with historical judgments in preexilic times, according to Roberts. In contrast, both Patterson and Robertson see an element of universal, eschatological judgment in Zephaniah's prophecies.

Pastors and Bible teachers will find this volume a welcome addition to their library. Educated lay persons will find much to stimulate their thinking and faith. They may need additional guidance to help them sift through some of the critical issues. Scholars will see many things they have not thought of before. While many specific points for criticism could be mentioned, none of them would detract from the overall value of this fine work on three neglected but important books of the OT.

THOMAS J. FINLEY  
TALBOT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*Prophet Oracles of Salvation in the Old Testament*, by Claus Westermann. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991. (Translated). Pp. 283. Paper.

The present volume is the fruit of the author's desire to investigate an area left untouched in his *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech* (1967) which dealt only with those forms in which judgment was announced. Since this more recent work examines no less than 246 passages, Westermann recognizes its limitations. His primary desire is to make clear the necessity of investigating the salvation oracles in their prophetic contexts. His chief conclusion is that during Israel's exilic and postexilic periods we can identify two groups of salvation oracles which stand in contrast to each other, much like the contrast that exists between the prophets of salvation and prophets of judgment in the preexilic period.

After a brief introductory chapter where Westermann provides the reader with an overview of his methodological approach, the material is divided into four main sections, followed by a chapter on excursuses related to the study and a chapter summarizing Westermann's conclusions. The book refers to relevant works in parentheses and provides the full citation in a bibliography at the end of the book.

Certain books, once read, do not lend themselves to later consultation. The layout of this volume in addition to the Scripture index at the back makes it an easily accessible study tool. The clarity of the introductory chapter and the concluding summary chapter enable the reader to become quickly acquainted or reacquainted with Westermann's approach and conclusions.

Westermann distances himself from certain methodological tendencies of the literary-critical method (not that he denies its place in OT studies). He asserts that questions of authorship (whether a given passage is "genuine" or not) hinder rather than help the exegesis of a specific passage. He also contends that a prophetic saying is not merely the literary expression of a certain prophet's thoughts. Rather, they are statements addressed to specific hearers. The task of the exegete is to discover the Hebrew *dabar*, i.e., the words of a messenger given by Yahweh so that this messenger can speak them to the people of Israel. After distinguishing between oracles of judgment and those of salvation, Wes-

termann explains his categorization of the latter as the "proclamation" rather than the "expectation" or "hope" of salvation. In fact, any expectation or hope of salvation may be foreign to the salvation oracle in question. Westermann does grant that a transition from proclamation to expectation of salvation does occur in the late stages of the oracles.

Based on their structure and content, Westermann divides the salvation oracles into four groups. Four principles guide him in this classification. First, he differentiates between salvation oracles found in collections (Deutero-Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Trito-Isaiah, Micah, and Zephaniah) or inserted into collections of judgment oracles and those oracles of salvation found in the midst of a historical report of a situation (as in the historical books). Second, the large number of oracles found in collections must be divided into a major group (Group 1) and three secondary groups (Groups 2–4). Third, those addressed to individuals must be separated from those addressed to a community. Fourth, the length of time between the giving of the announcement and the arrival of the announced deliverance must be considered. Finally, does the oracle simply proclaim deliverance or does it also describe the promised state of well-being?

Salvation oracles that are part of the various collections and that are addressed to the community compose Group 1. This is by far the largest group (157 passages) and is typified by the oracles in Isaiah 40–55. The texts of Group 2 (39 passages) are for the most part short and are generally supplements to other texts. They proclaim destruction for Israel's enemies and at the same time salvation for Israel. Group 3 (34 passages found in the majority of prophetic books and especially in Jeremiah) are marked by conditional proclamations of salvation. This is due to the deuteronomistic reworking of the original oracles. Foundational to this argument is the conclusion that the conditional oracle derives its function from a deuteronomistic hortatory reworking (*paraenesis*) which occurred after the fall of the southern kingdom. Exhortation takes the place of prophecy and the conditional oracle derives its function from a deuteronomistic hortatory reworking (*paraenesis*) which occurred after the fall of the southern kingdom. Exhortation takes the place of prophecy and the conditional oracles replace the unconditional. Group 4 (16 passages) consists of texts in which the prophetic proclamation of salvation is combined with a motif of piety of late Wisdom literature—the fate of the pious and the fate of the wicked. Passages in this group are primarily brief additions (insertions) to a number of prophetic texts and are addressed to individuals.

Westermann is to be commended for focusing his study on OT prophetic oracles of salvation. As one of the leading figures in form-critical studies his investigation deserves consideration. In addition to his examination of a large number of passages, he summarizes the significant motifs in each section and devotes an excursus to the use of introductory formulas in salvation oracles.

However, the foundational structure of Westermann's study is based on a fourfold grouping that is not above question and may be seriously flawed. This criticism is primarily directed to the three secondary groups. Group 1 consists of salvation oracles that are relatively easy to demarcate. While Westermann does well to avoid the authorship issue as a key principle in his examination of salvation oracles, the "short" additions and insertions that make up the three secondary groups assume certain compositional decisions (i.e., what is genuine

and what is not). Group 3 is built upon at least two questionable conclusions/assumptions. In the first place, the mutual exclusivity of unconditional and conditional salvation oracle does an injustice to the interwovenness of those motifs throughout the OT. Secondly, this clear break between unconditional and conditional oracles is built on the critical view of deuteronomistic tradition. In question is not the cohesiveness of Deuteronomy–2 Kings nor the intentional nature of that cohesiveness. At issue is whether the deuteronomistic reworking was greatly different from the original material. Westermann's discussion assumes a massive reworking. Finally, the late dating of Wisdom literature is an unproven assumption of the fourth group. It is also disappointing that he does not interact with E. Conrad's suggestion that the *gattung* normally identified as a "salvation oracle" actually involves two different *gattungen*: the war oracle and the patriarchal oracle (with a slightly different function than the salvation oracle).

As to mechanical problems, this reviewer found very few typographical problems (e.g., p. 40, "is" should be "it"). There were a few bibliographical errors (i.e., discrepancies between the information given in the body of the book and that in the bibliography). Compare the citation of Weippert's work (pp. 42, 276), Conrad's first article (pp. 42, 274), and Nicholson (pp. 227, 275). A few sources referred to in the body of the text are not included in the bibliography (Ahuis, p. 145; and Bracke, Baumann, and Dietrich, p. 259). E. Conrad's article on the "Fear not" oracles is from VT 34 (1984), not ZAW 96 (1984) (pp. 42, 294). Finally, the book presumes a certain degree of knowledge on the part of the reader concerning the various *gattungen*. The addition of a brief survey of the main features and primary function of the *gattungen* alluded to throughout this work would enhance the book's profitability.

Although this review finds several points of disagreement with Westermann, his treatment of such a large number of passages can be read with profit. Throughout the book there are insights that are both enlightening and helpful.

MICHAEL A. GRISANTI  
CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, edited by Roy B. Zuck. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. Pp. ix + 446. Cloth.

In any area of study, an understanding of the details of a specific discipline dictates his grasp of the *big picture*. In OT biblical studies, understanding the theological message of the entire testament as well as its major sections is essential to a proper interpretation of its individual passages.

The book under review takes several strides toward helping each reader better understand the *big picture* of OT biblical theology. The volume has a readability that will make it useful to any serious student of the Bible as well as the depth to contribute significantly to a seminarian's understanding of the OT. The present work on OT theology (the companion volume on NT theology is forthcoming) is the product of five authors, all professors at Dallas Theological Seminary. The biblical material is divided into eleven chapters, based on chronological, literary, and/or thematic concerns. Thomas Constable delineates

the theology of Joshua-Ruth and Homer Heater examines Samuel and Kings. Roy Zuck analyzes the Wisdom literature and the Song of Solomon. Eugene Merrill considers the message of the Pentateuch, the Chronicles, Ezra-Esther, and Ezekiel and Daniel. Robert Chisholm examines the Psalter and the rest of the prophetic corpus.

The text has several commendable features that enhance the readability and retention of its contents. The abundance of headings and subheadings (up to four levels) allows the reader to follow the authors' development and paves the way for easy reference to the various sections. The two indices (subject and person) also enhance the useability of the volume. Although the book has no bibliography, the numerous footnotes provide full citations.

In the introduction Merrill distinguishes biblical theology from systematic and sets forth the objectives of this volume. While the two theological disciplines are not mutually exclusive, biblical theology is unique from systematic in that it is inductive, finds its theological categories and emphases within the Bible itself, and is diachronic. Ideally, biblical theology paves the way for systematic theology.

Each contributor surveys a specific section of the Bible from an analytical and inductive stance and extracts from it those themes and emphases that recur with such regularity that they constitute their own theological rubrics.

Genesis 1:26-28 provides the theological center for the Old Testament, i.e., the extension of God's rule over the earth. God creates man in His image to represent Himself as the sovereign over all creation. Although man's fall soon frustrates this mandate, the problem is redressed by means of a covenant arrangement (Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, and Mosaic). The Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants constitute and enable Israel to be God's *servant nation*, charged with the responsibility of bridging the gap between the transcendent Creator and His creatures. Most of Exodus through Deuteronomy is a development of the terms of that servanthood. The theological thread running through Samuel and Kings is God's choice of a leader to represent Him as He implements His covenants with Israel.

Chronicles, written after Israel's return to the promised land, focuses on the Davidic monarchy as a theocratic expression of God's sovereign elective and redemptive purposes for His people and ultimately for all nations. Through His establishment of a covenant with the Davidic dynasty, the Lord has offered to all peoples a *model* of His dominion and a means of their participation in it.

Ezra and Nehemiah are written to the postexilic Jews who began to question the hope of full restoration to glory. These two volumes affirm the validity of that hope and challenge the remnant to do the same. Esther demonstrates that God's purposes cannot be stymied because He is forever loyal to His covenant with His eternally elected nation.

Although Wisdom literature is different than the majority of the Old Testament (more universal and individualistic than the historical/narrative material and more reflective than the prophetic), it forms an integral part of OT theology. It is firmly connected to the rest of the OT via three significant motifs: the fear of the Lord, the Law, and creation.

The Psalms contain Israel's expressions of faith in God and the nation's responses to His self-revelation in word and deed. The message of the Psalter

is that God (as the Creator of all things) exercises sovereign authority over the natural order, the nations, and Israel. The proper response to this sovereign King is trust and praise.

Each of the major prophets and Lamentations (treated in three separate chapters in the text under review) assert that the Lord will fulfill His ideal for Israel by purifying His people through judgment and then restoring them to a renewed covenant relationship. Jerusalem will be the center of His worldwide kingdom and once-hostile nations will be reconciled to Himself.

The eighth-century prophets (Hosea, Amos, Micah) condemn covenant violations and anticipate the ultimate restoration of God's people (based on provisions of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants). The prophets from the seventh-century (Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah) focus on the justice of God as exhibited in powerful judgment on an international scale. Finally, the sixth and fifth-century prophets (Joel, Obadiah, Haggai, and Zechariah) affirm that the realization of the promised restoration will take place, but it will not be automatic.

This volume is a "must buy" for all those interested in clearly communicating God's Word to others. Many are unable to take the time to "get the big picture" of a given section of the Old Testament before they begin an expository series. This volume lucidly provides the "big picture" for the various sections of the Old Testament as well as an introduction to the theological cohesiveness of the Old Testament as a whole. Kenneth Barker in the forward comments that "it is the best evangelical volume to appear on the subject of biblical theology in my lifetime, and I hope it will be widely welcomed and used, as it deserves to be" (x).

MICHAEL A. GRISANTI  
CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*The Gospel According to John*, by Donald A. Carson. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991. Pp. 715. Cloth.

The preface of D. A. Carson's commentary on John declares the purpose of the commentary to be "the explanation of the text of John's Gospel to those whose privilege and responsibility it is to minister the Word of God to others, to preach and to lead Bible studies." Further, it is designed so that "the informed layperson could also use the work in personal study of the Bible." This is to be accomplished through four facets of methodology: a focus on flow, or movement of thought; engagement with a representative part of secondary literature; discussion of the Gospel's contribution to Biblical and Systematic theology; and finally, an exposition of the Gospel as primarily *evangelistic*.

If the identification of audience leads to the assumption that the commentary is more popular than scholarly, this misunderstanding is quickly laid to rest in the introductory discussion. Carson examines the history of interpretation of the Gospel, the various critical approaches taken to it, its relationship to the synoptics, and its unity in an introduction that alone is worth the price of the book. Carson traces the history of interpretation from the Fathers to Bult-



mann (via Strauss) to recent commentators and scholars such as Raymond Brown, Barnabas Lindars, and particularly, Alan Culpepper in his work *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*. Some of the conclusions Carson defends are: the strong possibility that John himself is the source of the present form of the Gospel, the stylistic unity of the Gospel bearing witness to a "unified authorial stamp that makes the pursuit of sources a dubious enterprise"; a relationship of the fourth Gospel to the Synoptics that is neither direct literary dependence nor some correction of the synoptics, but rather an "interlocking tradition"; a background that is founded in the Old Testament, but not opposed to hellenistic phrases and concepts which are filled with Old Testament content; a tentative affirmation that John the son of Zebedee is the beloved disciple and also the author of the Gospel; and that the Gospel has as its purpose evangelism, particularly the evangelization of Jews and the Jewish proselytes. Carson argues for these with clarity and evidence, and demonstrates that his position makes at least as much sense of the evidence as do more sceptical views.

The body of the commentary contains Carson's exposition, which is consistently framed to give support to the conclusions presented in the introduction. Interpretive options are usually laid out well, though at times they can be difficult to locate, probably as a result of Carson's attempt to keep the work readable. While he occasionally describes the work as "brief" (as in "in such a brief work we cannot pursue . . ."), the 575 pages of exposition would certainly be daunting to many of those for whom the work is addressed.

Three main strengths in the commentary proper may be observed. The first is the exposition of the Old Testament quotations and allusions. Carson shows these to be primarily typological, and develops both the Old and New Testament contexts to explain the paradigm John is utilizing. The second major strength is that the exposition consistently defends in an able manner the authenticity and unity of the Gospel with arguments that are buttressed by evidence rather than emotion. The third strength found is that though he does not make full use of them in Biblical theology (see below), Carson capably points out throughout the work particular narrative devices used by John. These include phrases such as "night/darkness," "my time/my hour," "*ego eimi*" and such literary devices as the misunderstanding motif, irony and inclusio.

Perhaps the major weakness of the commentary is its failure to develop more thoroughly the biblical theology of the Gospel. Carson would perhaps attribute this to the brevity and scope of the work. He touches on but does not adequately develop John's particular theological grid. For instance, while the exposition refers to faith that is less than regenerative there is no developed discussion of levels of faith in John. The use of "*ego eimi*" on Jesus' lips is often seen to be devoid of theological implication. This is especially surprising in 6:19 where it is accompanied by "do not be afraid," a common Old Testament phrase accompanying the promise of the presence of Yahweh with His people. The misunderstanding motif is mentioned and described, but no theological development accompanies it (is there not some tie to synoptic parables which accomplish much the same purpose of both revealing and concealing?).

Carson's work on John is a valuable tool that could well become the standard for the careful homiletician. It is probably too detailed and difficult for all but the most informed of laypersons. For those in academics it will certainly

take its place among the important works, but should probably be supplemented with the more developed biblical theology of the commentaries by Brown or Schnackenburg.

JERRY D. COLWELL

LONDON BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

*Matthew*, by Richard B. Gardner. Believers Church Bible Commentary, E. Martens and H. Charles, eds. Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1991. Pp. 448. Paper.

This book is the third to be published in the Believers Church Series, a joint effort of six Mennonite and Brethren denominations. The series is intended primarily as a teaching resource for pastors and other Bible teachers in parish ministries and as a college and seminary textbook. Thus it strives for readability as well as careful exposition. Each section concludes with short essays on "The Text in Biblical Context" and "The Text in the Life of the Church." These essays address biblical theology and believers' church perspectives, including believers' baptism, commitment to Matt 18:15-20, and an emphasis on loving relationships and the way of the cross. The series is based on the conviction that the Spirit of God still speaks today through the living and authoritative Word. Yet it acknowledges that the believers' church tradition has often devalued historical-critical scholarship and it seeks to incorporate historical-critical insights.

Gardner, a member of the Church of the Brethren who teaches New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary in Oak Brook, IL, has also served as a writer and pastor. He acknowledges his debt to Matthean scholars J. D. Kingsbury, U. Luz, J. Meier, E. Schweizer, and D. Senior. He has chosen the *New Revised Standard Version Bible* as the basis of the commentary. He believes that the author of the first gospel was an unknown Jewish Christian with possible links to a community influenced by the Apostle Matthew. This author used the Gospel of Mark as his basic source but also collected his material from other sources, including a written "Q." Gardner's approach to the overall structure of Matthew acknowledges the five blocks of alternating narrative and discourse material as well as the recurring phrase "from that time Jesus began . . ." (4:17; 16:21). Finding these views of Matthew's structure unsatisfactory, he opts instead for a topical outline with six main sections, but his reasons for this approach are not stated. The amount of space given to introductory concerns (5 pages) is quite inadequate, though this problem is ameliorated somewhat by discussions of terms relating to introductory themes in the glossary at the end of the book.

Each pericope is handled with an introductory "preview," an outline, explanatory notes based on the outline, and the essays on the text in biblical and modern church contexts. The outline is based on careful analysis, though the titles given to the pericopes have a sermonic flavor. Gardner invites the reader to enter three worlds, the narrative world of the plot developed in the story, the historical world of the community for which the story was written, and the broader world of God's relationship with His people from the days of the Old Testament until now. No doubt these three perspectives are helpful, but conservative evangelicals may be uneasy that the world of the historical Jew is omitted.

The strengths of this commentary reflect Gardner's skills in synthesizing critical scholarship, present Matthew from the perspectives of literary criticism and biblical theology, and applying Matthew to current believers' church concerns. He has unpacked a great deal of scholarship and presented it in readable fashion. Readers should gain a better understanding of Matthew's plot and the place of Matthew in the flow of redemptive history. And they will be challenged by Matthew's message to live according to the teaching of Jesus in the world today.

The weaknesses of the commentary render it a dubious choice as a textbook, especially for graduate studies. The introduction to Matthew is brief and fails to address the identity of the intended audience. The discussion is lucid but generally lacks depth in dealing with details. Controversial texts and issues are handled with little mention of opposing viewpoints, let alone a rationale for accepting the viewpoint reached by the author. Thus the book should be of great value for parish Bible teaching, especially in a believers' church setting, but its usefulness in Christian higher education may be limited.

DAVID L. TURNER  
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

*Jesus and the Forgotten City: New Light on the Urban World of Jesus*, by Richard A. Batey. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. 224. Cloth.

This interesting little book succeeds in challenging the reader to think of Jesus in a different light than most of us are accustomed to thinking of Him. Instead of a rural youth from the uncultured hinterland of Galilee, He should be seen as a rather cosmopolitan individual, well-acquainted with the arts, politics, economy and commerce of a bustling Greco-Roman metropolis.

The occasion for this challenge is the excavations at the city of Sepphoris in which author Batey participated. This city, which is not mentioned in the Bible, is just three miles north of Nazareth and virtually in eyesight of the village of Jesus's boyhood. What the archaeologists have found since 1980 is a city built by Antipas in the years following its destruction in 4 B.C. It was the seat of government for Antipas, encircling within its stout defensive walls the royal residence, administrative buildings, a Roman-style theater, baths, and all the accoutrements of a prosperous city.

Batey stresses the significance of the theater at Sepphoris for some of the imagery used by Jesus, especially "hypocrite" or stage actor. He certainly makes some useful connections, and it is interesting that a major theater existed so near the home of Jesus. It helps establish that the metaphors would be meaningful to His audience. Yet its existence is not necessary for Jesus to use the imagery any more than a modern speaker needs first-hand acquaintance with gambling to use a phrase such as "an ace up his sleeve."

Batey writes with much enthusiasm, sometimes breaking into the present tense with all the drama of a best-seller. His book thus serves to provide some background to the Gospels and give the reader a flavor of the material culture of Palestine in the days of Jesus. It is especially useful in bringing attention to the excavations of a city that is rarely considered as figuring in the life of our

Lord. Readers will likely note, however, a tendency toward hyperbole and drawing more conclusions than the evidence warrants. (See, additionally, the harsh reviews of Batey's book in *Biblical Archaeologist*, June 1992).

Much of the text of Batey's book comprises a retelling of some of the parables of Jesus and a recitation of the events in His ministry. One should not come to this book expecting a scholarly description of the excavations at Sepphoris. It would be better to consult Eric M. Meyers's *Sepphoris* (Eisenbrauns, 1992) for details of the excavations.

Part of the title of Batey's book, *The Forgotten City*, apparently provoked Stuart S. Miller to the point of writing a substantial article in *Biblical Archaeologist* (June 1992, pp. 74-83, titled "Sepphoris, the Well Remembered City." Miller demonstrates that Sepphoris was known to many pilgrims and writers of the Jewish and Christian traditions. It is thus an overstatement for Batey to say in the Conclusion, "We had rediscovered a forgotten city." It should be noted, however, that not only is Sepphoris not mentioned in the New Testament, but it is also absent in some reference books, such as *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (including the supplement volume) and the new *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. This reader, unacquainted as he was with Sepphoris, found Batey's book to be useful for stimulating interest in the recent excavations. Batey is to be thanked for bringing the city again to the notice of Bible readers.

ROBERT IBACH

DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Archaeology and the New Testament*, by John McRay. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. 432.

This volume is a welcome contribution to every student of the New Testament who has more than a casual interest in archaeology. Its author has had long and rich experience as a field archaeologist as well as a teacher, and he knows how to present his material accurately, clearly, and attractively. He is professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School.

There has been a need for an up-to-date and thorough discussion of New Testament archaeology. Finegan's work (published in 1969 under the title *Archaeology of the New Testament*) implied more than it delivered inasmuch as it was limited mostly to sites in Palestine. McRay, however, has done a superb piece of work in covering sites throughout the first century world that have a bearing on the New Testament text.

This volume is generously illustrated with more than 150 photographs, along with numerous diagrams, maps, and charts, most of which are the author's and are well done. An exceedingly helpful introductory chapter covers such topics as the role of archaeology in NT studies, limitations of archaeology as proof, Biblical archaeology, the technology of excavation, and basic methods of excavation. Even the casual reader should find this chapter interesting.

The author includes information regarding most of the sites where excavations have occurred, together with helpful diagrams and/or photographs. In many instances personal reminiscences are included, and it is obvious that the

author has had firsthand experience over many years at some of the most significant excavations in Bible lands.

This work is more, however, than just an anthology of excavation sites. The author interweaves the Biblical narrative with the physical remains, and provides thought-provoking insights. He suggests, for example, with numerous reasons that John the Baptist may have had ties with Qumran (pp. 160–61). His discussion of the Asiarchs offers evidence that the office of Asiarch and that of priest were separate at Ephesus, thus easing the awkwardness of Paul's friendship with the Asiarchs, who have sometimes been described as priests of the emperor cult (pp. 255–56).

As a handbook of archaeological information pertaining to the New Testament, this work is up-to-date and it delivers what its title implies. It was one of the most enjoyable books I have read in a long time. It will be in my hands during my next trip to Israel. One typo was noted on page 117, line 1.

HOMER A. KENT

*The World of Biblical Literature*, by Robert Alter. New York: Basic Books, 1992. Pp. 225.

"The Bible, as I have tried to show throughout this volume, is literature before it is anything else, and so to read it 'as literature' really means to read it again—in its compelling immediacy, in the momentum of its complex continuities. That process of reading, full of challenges and discoveries, long ago helped to shape our collective lives, and it may still have a vital task to perform" (p. 210). This pair of concluding sentences in Professor Alter's successor to *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981) and *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (1985) provides a useful three-part structure for summarizing the full argument presented in the book and judging its applicability to evangelicals.

Alter chiefly wants "to consider the fundamental assumptions that underlie any possible literary reading of the Bible" (p. x) and to articulate "an apprehension of that world of writing, how it turns, how and why it is literary" (p. xii). Written for a general audience, the nine chapters of *The World* employ few scholarly notes, far more translations than quotations of Hebrew, and the fluid style that hallmarks Alter's prose. Granted, five of the chapters are reprints or revisions of previously-published essays (three from *Commentary* magazine), but the finely-crafted writing here pays a fitting tribute to the literary excellence of the Bible. But Alter provides more than proper words in proper places—specifically an impressive array of readings that shows the vitality and necessity of literary criticism in exegesis.

The first major principle in Alter's concluding sentences, quoted above, is how Scripture should be defined as fundamentally literary. Chapters 1–4, conveying the tone and texture of all nine, supply good answers. Ch. 1 contrasts the centuries-old divergence of views about the authorship, date of composition, and structure of individual books with the remarkable consensus of scholarly opinion about the literary artistry within the final text; according to ch. 2, the biblical authors did not ignore literary interests or even subjugate them to religious agendas; and ch. 3 illustrates the "distinctive poetics [that informs]

biblical narrative and biblical poetry" in order to show how the newer literary criticism improves upon the older automistic studies and archaeological digs called textual emendations. Then in ch. 4 Alter presents an unusually compelling case for rethinking the nature of literal meaning in the Bible; in fact, he sees "no real contradiction between the literal and figurative readings of narrative" because the literal data in the text spark the figurative readings that, at some point, must return to the data for stability and coherence. This argument alone is worth the investment of time and money in the book, though numerous details elsewhere provide additional rewards.

The second important principle in Alter's conclusion refers to the "compelling immediacy" and "complex continuities" of the biblical text. Probably the best discussion of these qualities appears in ch. 5 (titled "Allusion and Literary Expression"), which explains how the "density of allusion" in Scripture is not extraneous nicety but indispensable statement—not embellishment but, quite literally, the essence of the text. Alter's task, well executed and highly readable, is to explain how allusion helps to organize narrative exposition and to suggest actual content. Frequently, for example, biblical authors will repeat nearly verbatim an earlier clause or phrase, the slight alteration intended to reveal a change in the latter author's attitude or opinion about the episode. In 2 Sam 13:9ff. appear allusions to Gen 45:1, 39:7, and others, all of which adds "thematic depth" to the account of Amnon's violation of Tamar (pp. 113–17). Therefore, Alter reasons, the Joseph narrative is not a curious archaeological footnote to 2 Sam 13 but an integrated, dynamic stimulus and structure for its composition. This argument has a couple of important theoretical problems, summarized below, but in fairness to the immediate context and to the other fine examples, Alter presents ample evidence for the powerful immediacy and complex continuity of Scripture.

The final major concept in Alter's conclusion is the potential influence of Bible reading upon American society. If *GTJ* readers are much more confident about this potential, Alter's hesitancy may be well-founded. Scripture reading *does* have a vital function to perform, if people will do it well and if conservatives in particular will include literary analysis in exegesis. Sadly, neither condition is common now, despite the twenty years of fruitful research in the field. This development, in turn, heightens the relevance of several implications of Alter's argument. First, grammatical-historical exegesis alone is inadequate and undermines the inherent appeal of the Bible to readers; the text must be read literarily also. Second, the bible is not a sterile laboratory specimen to be dissected but a dynamic, organic unity ready to stimulate and instruct. And third, powerful preaching and teaching of Scripture must include literary analysis and sensitivity.

Most provocative arguments display some weaknesses and *The World* is no exception. In fact, one particular problem raises questions that the book lacks either the theory, occasion, or context to address well. Alter's rejection of divine inspiration and inerrancy (pp. 193ff.) dissociates exegesis from an orthodox position on biblical authorship, preventing any claim about the veracity of the text based upon the character of its Author. Such division, moreover, can lead to endless catacombs of needless complexity and confusion. For ex-

ample, what better rationale than inerrancy would support Alter's (insightful) explications that depend so heavily upon precise wording in the original? In addition, Alter's plea for a rereading of the Bible is laudable enough; but *why* read, much less reread, the Bible anyway? "[S]hap[ing] our collective lives," however noble and useful, is not an adequate reason. One reads the Bible ultimately to know its Author and to submit to its (and to His) authority—no pun intended. This motivation demands scrupulous attention to the imaginative dimension of biblical artistry; but more importantly, it highlights the crucial relationship between the doctrine of inspiration and one's basic assumptions about the theory of reading.

These principles lie outside Alter's book and will prompt some readers to raise crucial questions. What is the nature of textual authority? Wherein lies the authority of Alter's own text? Why are not his explications mere vapors that appear for awhile and then pass away? Is the entire project of critical examination (of Scripture or of any text) ultimately and inescapably rooted in pure aesthetics and total subjectivity? perhaps most relevant to *The World* is the question Why is Scripture fundamentally and preeminently literature? The only answer consistent with Alter's method is that the final text is artful writing. Evangelical readers hoping for a more fully developed answer, one built upon the attributes of God (including His appreciation for beauty, creativity, balance, texture, color, and form), will have to look elsewhere.

These unresolved issues are more than offset, however, by the range and depth of Alter's study. Given the serious theological reservations just mentioned, conservative Christians must read, discuss, and assimilate the instruction that pervades this book. Then will appear—within the very pages of God's Word—the compelling, centuries-old artistry that has shaped the landscape within the world of biblical literature.

BRANSON L. WOODARD, JR.  
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

*New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 2d ed., edited by J. D. Douglas. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. 896. Cloth.

The *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (NTCERK) is a revised edition of the *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, which appeared in 1955 to supplement the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1886). The intent of the revised edition is to present a retrospective view of twentieth-century church history by looking at the people, events, and ideas that have shaped its course. It is no longer considered a supplement to *Schaff-Herzog* and can be used without having access to the thirteen-volume work.

NTCERK contains about 2100 articles written by 365 contributors, a few from third-world countries. The articles are more from an evangelical perspective than the 1955 edition. About half the articles are short biographies. Topical articles are generally longer and include such categories as denominations, social and political issues, countries, organizations, movements, cults, gatherings,

and ecclesiastical, biblical, and theological terms. Two-thirds of the articles are new. Material retained from the first edition consists mostly of biographical sketches. All retained material has been updated, especially the bibliographies at the end of the articles.

The biographies do not include anyone who died before 1900. There are a few biographical oversights, such as omitting the death date of R. G. Lee (1978) and several others. The article on A. T. Robertson lists 18 works, but omits his *magnun opus*, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek in the Light of Historical Research*. The biographies are mostly Protestant, with some Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish persons. It also includes some who have influenced the thought of this century from outside the Judeo-Christian faith, such as John Dewey, Anthony Flew, Sigmund Freud, Mahatma Gandhi, William James, Carl Jung, Arnold Toynbee, and Alfred North Whitehead.

The work is to be commended for its focus on contemporary issues and trends. There are articles on such topics as abortion, AIDS, apartheid, bioethics, censorship, church and state, encounter groups, euthanasia, homosexuality, human rights, psychotherapy, and surrogacy. It also presents articles on Eastern religions and New Age themes, although not as many as would be expected from such an influential movement. Articles include astrology, Buddhism, guru, Hinduism, magic, meditation, New Thought, occultism, parapsychology, spiritism, and theosophy. Conspicuously absent are articles on reincarnation and Satanism. Trends within Christendom are also covered (e.g., charismatic movement, black religion, fundamentalism, liberalism, liberation theology).

The articles on biblical and theological themes trace the developments, interpretations, and debates during this century. Thus there is not the overlap one might suspect with Bible dictionaries and theological encyclopedias. The articles on countries focus on their religious conditions. One of the longest articles is a twenty-page summary of Bible translations in various languages.

The major shortcoming is the insufficient number of cross references. If one were to look up "evolution" or "moral majority," he would find neither an article nor a cross reference to where the information is found (i.e., the science and religion article or the biography on Jerry Falwell).

In summary, the work achieves its purpose with a broad spectrum of up-to-date, scholarly, and readable articles. In spite of a few weaknesses, NTCERK is a useful ready-reference source for theological and public libraries and can be of value to pastors, professors, and lay people as well.

RICHARD A. YOUNG  
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*Speaking from the Depths: Alfred North Whitehead's Hermeneutical Metaphysics of Propositions, Experience, Symbolism, Language and Religion*, by Stephen T. Franklin. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990. Pp. 410. Cloth.

*Speaking from the Depths* by Stephen Franklin (former professor of Theology at Wheaton) is a massive examination, exposition, and especially



interpretation of the profound and difficult processive vision of British mathematician-philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. While it could be said that this work had its origins in a doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago, its real origins lie in Franklin's own quest to discover a way of explaining how human language can speak of God. In the aftermath of the earlier "positivistic" and narrow views of language (e.g., A. J. Ayer and the later Wittgenstein), Franklin has found in Whitehead "a profound metaphysical vision which allowed for the possibility of God-language conveying genuine claims about what is the case . . . set in a nuanced description of human language in general." It is with this in mind that Franklin examines and interprets Whitehead's thought in a consciously constructive way in order to lay the effectual groundwork for a more evangelical or orthodox use of Whitehead's insights for expressing its faith and doctrinal expressions of that faith than has been the rule in the past.

*Speaking from the Depths* is set forth in four major sections and subdivided into twenty chapters in which the book's consecutive argumentation is built. Part one is where Franklin sets up the larger Whiteheadian vision of reality, the "big picture," which will form the necessary context or background within which the ensuing discussion takes place. This is also the most difficult of all the sections because of the very abstract nature of the "Process" perspective and Whitehead's manner of expression, including vocabulary and definitions. The reader, having been thus "educated," is more able later to progress from the crucial groundwork to the following development with greater facility. But part one also deals (as its title says) with "propositions." In Whitehead these "propositions are more foundational than symbolism, language or religion." Also, "propositions" fit more directly into the Whiteheadian "big picture" that Franklin is attempting to construct. Franklin's focus on Whitehead's understanding of the nature and stages of "conrescence" (concretizing) and the relation between this process in actual entities (especially human beings) and the way of "prehension" of past actual entities into the present process of "conrescence" as this relates to truth, consciousness, objectification and actuality is specifically important. Franklin's discussion of Whitehead's protest against the Kantian bifurcation of nature or reality, a perspective that has long cursed modern theology, is significant. Still, the question of the adequacy of Whitehead's answer remains—Monism is not an option for Christian theology.

Parts two and three on Symbolism and Language are not only related concerning Franklin's interpretation and theological application of Whitehead's thought, but together begin to *dramatically* narrow the discussion toward the author's real concern. Truth, consciousness, objectification, etc., initially set in the context of "propositions" must be reckoned in relation to experience, sense perceptions and language as forms of symbolism. Part two, put briefly, establishes the process view of the "present" situation as the world relates to the past, which it has "prehended" (taken in) to the future and to the whole of reality (world) wherein everything happens and wherein every actual entity (such as persons) "conresces" (develops) toward ultimate "satisfaction" (completion). For human beings this opens and develops consciousness, intellectual feelings, etc., which are necessary for coherence, symbolic reference and the critical emergence of language.

Whitehead's theory of language is the portion of this intense book where most pieces begin to come together. It is in this section that the Whiteheadian conclusions are established which found the bases upon which Whitehead's discussion of religious language (part four) and the necessity of doctrine or theology are expressed. As part of Whitehead's larger theory of symbolism, language whether ordinary or metaphysical, is that by which a person experiences and understands the world. The "initial" subjective aim "which God gives to all actual entities" can only be elicited or given explicitness for the advanced stages of concrescence (i.e. humans) through language. One's experience in a context/culture is largely colored by language. What Franklin is pointing out is that there is a real connection between experience and the linguistic structures which arise from it. Experience is always first for Whitehead, but *how* we experience and the *content* of that experience is largely formed by language, itself a received way of seeing the world. Franklin's discussion of Whitehead's comparison of ordinary and metaphysical language, which is to be contrasted with the views of logical positivism, is very important. Ordinary and metaphysical language are alike in some ways and different in others. Franklin shows how, while metaphysical language is more abstract and general, both (ordinary and metaphysical) have a relation to the symbolized propositions they are intended to express. Indeed, after preliminary discussion, Franklin shows how Whitehead overturns the usual way of expressing such relation by asserting that ordinary language is analogical while metaphysical language is univocal. *Much* more is discussed by Franklin with regard to Whitehead's highly significant understanding of the nature and rule of language, but its application to "Religion" has been Franklin's focus.

Finally, upon the whole of Whitehead's explanation of the act of understanding (especially as it relates to hermeneutics), each of Franklin's final three chapters conclude in their own way the argumentation of the book. For Whitehead "religion" has more to do with the "patterns of coordinated values" than with the relation and response of human beings to God. The whole of Whitehead's metaphysics discussed through the book mold his view of religion. In a way akin to Schleiermacher, God is the "whence" or source of religious experience, hence the datum to be studied. God is introduced by Whitehead to help understand this experience as the concrescing human being responds to the "patterns of coordinated values." At this point, Franklin rightly points out how Whitehead lacks, in his understanding of "religion," any sense of what Rudolph Otto called the "numinous" experience of the *mysterium tremendum*, the overwhelming and fearful "wholly other." This "fear of the Lord" is, in fact, debunked by Whitehead as "primitive" in comparison to Whitehead's own "rational religion." In "God and Religion," Franklin discusses Whitehead's doctrine of God showing how God's role in Whitehead is primarily as that which provides a theoretical *explanation* for the intuitions of religion, coordinate values and the permanency of the universe over against the flux. Whitehead does not deal directly with God. Still Franklin shows that God is crucial for Whitehead's whole metaphysical understanding, his entire vision of reality. Franklin's discussion of how a union (rather than Whitehead's separation) between "God" and "creativity" does much to make Whitehead's understanding of God basically orthodox. Whitehead's implied arguments for God's existence are

also quite significant. The last chapter of part four, "Religious Language," advances the discussion in showing the necessity of such language as that which elicits religious experience into the realm of the ordinary. Religious language and doctrinal expressions of religion are shown to be vitally important in the shaping of the human experience of the world in more effective faithfulness to the initial subjective aim given by God to each actual entity. Franklin's closing discussions of how, for Whitehead, religious language works *ex opere operato* in eliciting experience and shaping experience, and how one could express the biblical view that God is Creator by His Word, are thought provoking and stimulating, laying open possibilities.

A work of this nature and density is difficult to comprehend and assimilate, let alone review. This book is no introduction to Whitehead or to process thought. It is a "scholar's monograph" which assumes that the reader has some knowledge of "Process" thought and must be assessed from that perspective. Franklin is to be commended for courageously taking up a critical issue in modern theology and vigorously working to bring an answer, using a very difficult and influential contemporary philosophical expression to meet the theological challenge. Using A. N. Whitehead's description of reality as a way of dealing with the problem of God-language for theology, falls within the tradition (e.g., Augustine, Aquinas, etc.) of employing a prominent philosophical perspective to give effective contemporary expression to the Christian faith. The problem, of course, has been ever one of maintenance or loss of the Gospel in the process (e.g., Gnostics, Arians, etc.). It surely appears to be Franklin's desire to follow one such as Augustine in this adventure. Additionally, reading through this book is a real education in Whitehead's process philosophy. Even with some background understanding in process theology, the reading of this work was arduous, sometimes frustrating, but ultimately fruitful. Franklin constructively delves into Whitehead's dense and abstract perspectives on reality in order to tap such for evangelical expression and insight in opposition to that of John Cobb, Schubert Ogden or Lewis Ford.

While it must not be understood as a criticism, given the purpose and prospective audience of this book, still it is very difficult reading through the first major section of this work (Franklin warns the reader of this in the "Preface"). Fortunately, Franklin is unlike Whitehead in being willing to give illustrations. For example, his diagrams are essential to following his discussion. While it is probably necessary to his final purposes and goals, the lengthy and painstaking discussion required to finally reach the insights of part four ("Religion") make the effort questionable. Finally, the possibilities which Franklin opens for the evangelical use of Whiteheadian thought are, at some points, given in overly brief form. After all that work to get there, more results were expected. Maybe a volume doing just that is what Franklin has in mind. Those who find Franklin's careful discerning "synthesis" of certain Whiteheadian insights with Christian orthodoxy and the results he does give to be questionable, *may* be hasty. Franklin should bring this thesis of his out into fuller and more explicit theological expression which could be assessed.

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*Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, & Evangelical*, vol. 1, by James Leo Garrett, Jr. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990. Pp. xii + 658.

After many years of successfully communicating Christian theology to his classes, James Leo Garrett, Jr., has written a systematic theology which is an outstanding representation of the discipline. Systematic theology is ill-defined in the minds of many, but this book not only acquaints the reader with what systematic theology *is*, but also demonstrates how it *is done*!

Building upon the disciplines of exegesis, Biblical theology and historical theology, systematic theology is the capstone of an intensive labor to understand and communicate God's truth. Garrett describes his method: "... I have made very effort to locate, interpret, and correlate all the pertinent Old and New Testament texts or passages and the more significant statements from the patristic period to the modern age before undertaking any formulation of my own" (p. ix). The author has a command of the Biblical and historical sources which he has utilized in every area of study in this first of two volumes. The appellation "Biblical, Historical, & Theological" is accurate and presents the arrangement of the argument for each doctrine covered. Garrett begins with a statement of the issue or issues, presents the pertinent Old and New Testament data and then joins to that material the interpretations that have come forth in the history of the church before drawing his conclusion.

The subjects for consideration in this volume are prolegomena, revelation, the Bible, the doctrine of God, creation and providence, humankind, sin and the person of Jesus Christ. The breadth of presentation on each of these topics is impressive. Though not all of the conclusions of the writer are acceptable, the data, interpretations and conclusions offered are stimulative and challenging.

The discussions of revelation, inspiration and inerrancy, recently areas of great controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention of which Garrett is a representative, are thorough, fair and stimulating. Garrett, like Millard Erickson before him, opts for a both/and approach to the question of whether revelation is propositional or relational. The contribution on inspiration is an example of the author's intent of bringing together Biblical and historical data in arriving at a conclusion. Though that conclusion will not be acceptable to all, it is important to go through the process with the author before arriving at a final judgment.

The validity of the claim that the Bible is the Word of God is subjected to scrutiny. This common assumption is upheld by Garrett by only after recognizing the true weight of evidence for the assertion.

The doctrine of the Trinity is unique to Scripture and is developed very capably. Biblical and historical contributions are presented in such a fashion as to provide the reader what is necessary to understand well the issues and arrive at the truth.

Garrett prefers the progressive creationist view in interpreting the Genesis 1-2 account but is cautious in his discussion of both the creation in general and humans in particular. Again, it is not necessary to agree with all of the conclusions to benefit from the presentation.

The discussion concerning humankind is valuable in its adherence to the Biblical use of terms that have resulted in the dividing of persons into various components: body, soul and/or spirit. Garrett affirms that the Biblical emphasis

is on the unity of the human person, not parts, and his word studies bring together in succinct fashion the support for this contention. Also appreciated in this regard is the handling of the issue of total depravity which briefly, but clearly, identifies what it means and what it does not mean.

Of special interest is the study of the person of Christ. While traditionally evangelicals have commenced Christology with the "from above" emphasis, beginning with His deity and moving to His incarnation, Garrett begins with His humanity and works toward His deity contending that one can follow this method *and* "incorporate all the transcendent aspects of the person of Christ" resulting "in a full-orbed, balanced doctrine" (p. 530). His reasons for following this approach justify the arrangement and he does succeed in his attempt.

This book is written in outline style and reflects the use of the material in the classroom. That form does not detract but benefits the investor who will use this work often as a reference in future study. Appreciation of this volume is joined with an anticipation of the completion of Garrett's valuable gift to the church.

RONALD T. CLUTTER

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*Christianity and the Nature of Science: A Philosophical Investigation*, by J. P. Moreland. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. Pp. 263.

J. P. Moreland has in recent years shown himself to be one of the leading young Christian philosophers and active apologists for the faith. In this text he has focused on the area of concern which many have asserted is his real strength, the philosophy of science and the relationship between science and the Christian faith. A preliminary example of this expertise was his chapter, "Science and Christianity," in his erudite and well received book on apologetics, *Scaling the Secular City*. In observing the multi-faceted interrelationship between the sciences and Christianity, Moreland has also brought forth a unique contribution to contemporary evangelical thought that will hopefully stir much further thinking and research by Christians. The only comparable works are Bernard Ramm's *A Christian View of Science and Scripture* (1954) and *Philosophy of Science* by Del Ratysch (1986). Yet given Moreland's directions and purposes here is a true singularity about this book. Clearly, given the current "scientistic" perceptions of science as the only truly rational realm, this is also a timely work that will clear away some of the current foggiest of these issues. Ignorance and an attitude of ostrich-like unconcern about science too often characterize the anti-intellectualistic evangelical community which is often content with its subjective piety in the midst of a materialistic, scientistic culture. No wonder Christianity seems ineffectual in this era. This issue, science and Christianity, must have an impact for the (re-)education of Christians in the context of this society.

This work may be properly categorized as "philosophy of science." A central question at the heart of the book for which many scientists have no full answer, is "what *is* science?" This is a question which many would want to approach by assuming the answer is already known. In actuality this is a question which few could adequately define. Moreland helps the reader try to see that this is far from a cut-and-dried issue. The complexities that surround the

question of the identity of science are multitudinous. Along with the question of science's identity, there is the difficulty of setting down a final line of demarcation between science and non-science. Moreland brings clarity to current debate and with it such points of concern as whether theology or philosophy can be understood as "scientific" given the oft heard assertion that *the* scientific method is a myth. How does all of this fit into current attitudes toward "non-scientific" subjects, i.e., the perspective of "scientism" that only science (reckoned usually as the "physical" sciences) is truly rational? What then is the relationship of science to other disciplines (especially theology and philosophy) and to the Christian faith in light of this epistemic bias? Is that a real picture of what is scientific? These and other crucial issues that are currently under debate at many levels are effectively handled and cogently dealt with as Moreland works to unravel and separate the true from the false. On p. 12 the larger purposes for this text are stated: "The purpose of this book is to assist and encourage Christians to think more clearly about the relationship between science and theology."

In working through Moreland's unfolding the nature of science and the role of science within the interactive and interconnective web of human life and thought, three issues seemed to arise repeatedly in various contexts. The reference to the nature, method and limits of science has already been discussed. A second critical issue is the ongoing realism-antirealism debate among current scientists and philosophers of science. The differences lie in whether science gives us an increasingly truer picture of the world as it is (realism) or if the theories of science are really only convenient and helpful fictions that reflect not the world but operations in the world (antirealism). A third issue for Moreland is the role of theology and the Christian faith to the various sciences, especially the physical sciences. Within this, of course, is the question as to the scientific status of "Creation Science." Herein the epistemic differentiation between the two (or more) sides and the need for Christians to effect real integration of the subjects are clear concerns for the author.

In assessing the strong points of *Christianity and the Nature of Science* a number of items stand out. First, this is an exceedingly timely book. In a time of rampant "secularism," "materialism" and (on the other hand) "occultism" (New Age), Christians are in desperate need of a way of seeing, knowing and responding to false notions and stylized reductionism on both fronts. The text reflects his continued growth and interaction (Moreland speaks of becoming a "chastened realist"). Further, he asks the crucial questions, cutting through all the well known distractions, and in the heat of controversy shows a superb ability in analysis and critique of the various views. He is also open and humble, immensely teachable, willing to show not only points of growth in his own thought but shortcomings in his own position ("cf. the question of realism and the need for further work in creationism). Moreland gives effective examples and diagrams, illustrating and clarifying the sometimes weighty points. He also has an effective way of communicating and a lively style that ensures movement from point to point.

Possibly one more versed in current issues might fault this or that explanation or characterization, but Moreland is scrupulously fair with all legitimate points. This edition, while having an excellent bibliography, unfortunately lacks an index of subjects. Subsequent editions will apparently include one.

Finally, by way of exhortation, this book is *must reading*. Many reviewers arrive at that conclusion automatically but his work is an exception. Christians

in all walks of life must become oriented to the issues found in Moreland's book. It would make an excellent text for philosophy, apologetics, philosophy of science or science courses within a Christian setting. Educated Christians could well use this text as the basis for group study and discussion in local churches. In an age of scientism when true and false perspectives are often indistinguishable behind the covering veil of "scientific rationality," it is dangerous to hide from the issues.

JOHN MORRISON  
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*Our Idea of God: An Introduction to Philosophical Theology*, by Thomas V. Morris. Contours of Christian Philosophy series, C. Stephen Evans, ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991. Pp. 192. Paper.

Thomas Morris has added a significant volume to the Contours of Christian Philosophy series. As with previous volumes in the series, *Our Idea of God* tackles a variety of problems that have long been debated by theologians and philosophers. Morris analyzes alternate views as to their philosophical cogency and their value in the construction of a Christian world view.

*Our Idea of God* is not a philosophical defense of the existence of God or the rationality of religious belief, but rather a defense of the traditional Christian concept of God. The book is of current interest in view of the rise of non-Christian notions of God. What is God like? Can we articulate a conception of God that is both biblically faithful and philosophically plausible?

Morris begins by evaluating the arguments concerning whether rational discussion of God is possible. He refutes the arguments of theological pessimism based on the limitations of human language and concepts, contending that human language and thought are flexible enough to extend far beyond ordinary employment. He links this idea with the biblical doctrine of creation in which God created humans for the purpose of communion to conclude that rational discussion about God is possible. Morris admits that his theological optimism presupposes prior knowledge of God, but argues that basic knowledge of any kind cannot be demonstrated with non-circular arguments.

Morris then discusses the method for determining a feasible concept of God. After dismissing universal revelational theology, he settles on two methods which undergird the argumentation in the rest of the book: creation theology and perfect being theology. The basic core of perfect being theology is Anselm's idea that God is the greatest possible being. This thought provides the governing focus for additional theistic concept building involving the properties of God. The methodology then evaluates which properties are to be considered among the "great-making" properties, the nature of those properties, and the philosophical and theological problems involved.

Succeeding chapters discuss such topics as God's goodness, power, knowledge, eternity, creation, incarnation, and the Trinity. Morris contends that God is necessarily good, that he must have perfect power, and that his knowledge must be complete. He arrives at these conclusions primarily from the inference of perfect being theology, rather than from independent arguments. Morris discusses such problems as whether God is praiseworthy or

morally good if he were not free to do evil; whether God could create a stone he could not lift; and whether God's foreknowledge destroys free will. Although the latter issue is left unsettled, it is especially illuminating and transcends the discussions found in most theological works.

Some issues could not be philosophically resolved, yet the alternative positions remain biblically faithful. For example, Morris considers both possibilities that God is atemporally eternal (outside of time) and that he is temporally everlasting (within time) to be biblically feasible. He also finds Richard Swinburne's social theory of the Trinity to be a plausible alternative to singularity theories.

The discussions are designed for non-specialists. The style is lucid and concise, with technical terms defined whenever used. Although intended primarily for an introductory textbook in Philosophical Theology, it could also be used as a supplemental text in theology courses, especially those focusing on Christian theism. The book will aptly serve to broaden the theological awareness and general scholarship of the evangelical community.

RICHARD A. YOUNG  
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*The Political Meaning of Christianity: The Prophetic Stance, An Interpretation*, by Glenn Tinder. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991. Pp. 257. Paper.

Glenn Tinder offers the reader his personal statement, an interpretation of the political meaning of Christianity. His viewpoint is "broadly that of the Reformation," and his "attitudes are more Lutheran than Calvinist" (p. 2). His interpretation is not markedly denominational, though he believes it is broadly orthodox.

Tinder emphasizes that his conclusions are an interpretation intended to encourage inquiry. He is not seeking to create new dogma, although he acknowledges vast confusion among the peoples of the world, and he hopes that his statement will in some way lessen the confusion. Tinder believes that confusion has increased in part because Christians and unbelievers alike have forgotten some of the profound insights of Christianity.

The author believes that Christianity contains "credible good sense concerning life" from which all people can benefit (p. 5). His main thesis is that Christianity, via the prophetic stance it provides, offers a means of civility in a highly chaotic, demoralized, uncivil age.

The prophetic stance is the central idea of this text. Tinder believes that "the primary political requirement of Christianity is not a certain kind of society or a particular program of action but rather an attitude, a way of facing society and of undertaking programs of action. Christianity implies skepticism concerning political ideals and plans. For Christianity to be wedded indissolubly to any of them . . . is idolatrous and thus subversive of Christian faith" (p. 8).

The author affirms a Christianity that is neither conservative nor liberal, capitalistic nor socialistic. Rather, the prophetic stance is an individual (not group) attitude based upon values that hold all human systems in judgment.

Perhaps Tinder's greatest contribution is his clear, theologically sound enunciation that human beings are depraved and selfish yet infinitely valuable, that deeply discouraging sin exists yet humanity is not without hope. In this



the author promotes an understanding of both the created-but-fallen order and of the redemption story of the life and work of Christ.

Tinder observes that the modern mind's greatest error is in thinking that Christ, the God-man, can be ignored. He rightly notes that to forget God is to eliminate human dignity, Christian morality, and political meaning. Twentieth century modern man has attempted to displace God with the false gods of science, technology, humanism, and working class, nationalism, etc. But ultimately nothing satisfies, and as Dostoevsky noted, "everything is permitted" (p. 50).

Tinder argues that the individual is exalted in dignity by God's creation through *agape*. Part of *agape* for humanity is human destiny. Human beings are eschatological and teleological creatures. History has meaning because it leads beyond history to eternity. A Christian understanding of eschatology prevents historical idolatry, including those involving political ideologies and extreme nationalism.

Christians, the author contends, must always be skeptical of actual states while supporting the state in principle. Tinder curiously views the state, while necessary, as essentially evil, a result of sin. He does not seem to think that the state has any positive role to play. If any criticism may be offered on this count, it would be that Tinder understates Christians' mission to transform society and the state. He seems content with a Lutheran dichotomy that stops short of pressing Christian morality upon a non-Christian world.

The author believes that the logic of Christianity provides Christians with ideals, which in turn enable Christians to examine the world with a more objective lens. Christianity, Tinder observes, supports liberty, equality, and community and is pacific and universalistic. He is careful to note that the Scripture does not permit the Christian to absolutize any of these ideals.

Christianity works toward liberty, even though humanity in its sinfulness will use liberty to promote secularity. While liberty has become a vehicle for individualistic excesses, Tinder still believes it is compatible with another Christian ideal, community. Christians inhabit fundamentally different orders, society (necessary association) and community (authentic unity), and must learn to live in this tension. In this world, Tinder observes, real community does not exist, but better societies move beyond mere physical proximity to the promotion of the spiritual proximity that characterizes community.

Tinder may be faulted for his questioning of the literal meaning of some passages of Scripture, for example Adam's story in Genesis and the "myth" of the Tower of Babel. At one point, he wishes for Christians to be delivered from the "captivity to propositional forms" (p. 130). He says that Christians do not possess truth, for human beings are fallible and because God does not provide truth that can be translated into words. Christians' faith is not in words or stories, or doctrines, though these forms are necessary, but in Jesus.

Tinder's work is erudite, sometimes difficult to read, sweeping in scope, and generally balanced. His intellectual humility is refreshing. While the text falls short of book jacket claims like "a modern classic of political theory," it is a worthwhile and challenging work. This book will be especially helpful to the theoreticians among the readership.

REX M. ROGERS

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*Puritan Christianity in America*, by Allen Carden. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990.

Another book on Puritanism! How does this one differ from the dozens of others that have found their way to publication in the last 20 to 30 years? The author presents the reader with two separate theses: the first deals with the theological beliefs of the Puritans culled from the sermons and writings of Puritan clergy and political leaders; the second portion of the book is a synthesis of the findings of the most prominent Puritan historians such as Bercovitch, Breen, Bremer, Demos, Foster, Hall, Lockridge, Middlekauf, Morgan, Rutman, and Ryken.

Carden contends that Puritan spiritual views were neglected or misunderstood by Perry Miller, the guru of Puritan scholars. Carden says, "Miller underemphasized the Bible as the principle source of Puritan thought." It is somewhat typical within academia for a work of superb erudition such as Perry Miller's work on Puritanism to undergo reexamination and scrutiny by a group of younger scholars who set out to test particular components of the overall thesis. The author falls in this category. The book is apparently an extension of the research completed for the dissertation at the University of California at Irvine in 1977 entitled, "The Ministry and the Word: The Clergy, the Bible, and Biblical Themes in Five Massachusetts Towns, 1630-1700."

The opening chapter provides a terse overview of the historical origins of Puritanism. Carden credits English Puritanism with "clear, biblical, evangelical preaching and genuine piety" during Queen Elizabeth's reign; however, he fails to substantiate these claims. To do so would no doubt divert the reader from the primary focus of establishing the biblicism of the Puritans in New England in the seventeenth century. The case for biblicism would be strengthened by providing answers to nagging questions. If spiritual matters held primacy, why did the Puritans refuse to separate from the Church of England? Why does John Winthrop attribute the Puritan exodus to deteriorating social conditions if spiritual issues were foremost?

The book amasses abundant testimony regarding the theological beliefs of the Puritans, all meticulously documented from the sermon literature of the period. Here the author performs a remarkable service by ascertaining the Puritan theology from the extensive literature and categorizing it according to conventional topics. It is surprising, however, to note the scarcity of information on certain subjects. There is little reference to the traditional pillars of Calvinism—predestination and election. Carden maintains that, "References to the sovereign selection by God for some of salvation (election) and some for damnation (reprobation) are scarce in seventeenth-century sermons." (p. 84)

Interspersed throughout the discussion of Puritan theology are the mistaken conclusions of Perry Miller. Miller "misconceived" the Puritan view that original sin was inherent in man, ignored or underestimated the Puritan commitment to Christ, and "made little distinction in the triune roles of the Puritan's God." Carden, however, accepts Miller's understanding of the covenant of grace, but rejects the view that it rested on "the competence of human reason."

The latter half of the book reads like an annotated bibliography on the various social views of the Puritans. Those familiar with the recent historical

work on the Puritans will not find anything new. Some of the discredited myths about Puritans are highlighted such as their alleged preference for Old Testament texts, their purported early marriages, and their reputation as sexual prudes. The inclusion of this synthesis on recent Puritan scholarship constitutes a second thesis that does not necessarily harmonize with the author's purpose of proving the theological unity and biblicism of the seventeenth-century New England community. However, the two sections of the book provide a vivid contrast between the ideal and the real, between beliefs and the actual practice within the Puritan community.

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*The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, edited by Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991. Pp. viii + 285.

Among the books currently in circulation focusing upon the evangelical movement, this work is the most informative. Its contribution begins with an introduction in which the difficulty encountered in choosing the title of the book confronts one with the problem of writing on evangelicalism. Is there *one evangelicalism* of which there are different varieties or are there *different evangelicalisms*? What characteristic or group of characteristics clearly define(s) the movement? The editors are not even agreed on the value of the use of the term *evangelical*. Dayton would place a moratorium on the use of the word which he does not consider sufficiently descriptive while Johnston argues for the value of the term in identifying a family.

Arising out of debate in the Evangelical Theology Group of the American Academy of Religion, the essays included in this book are written from a variety of perspectives identified, to a greater or lesser extent, with American evangelicalism. The majority of the fourteen essayists are participants in the movements on which they write. In this collection are some presentations that prove to be more beneficial than others but each makes a valuable contribution to the whole. Articles address evangelicalism in relation to premillennialism, fundamentalism, Pentecostals, Adventists, the holiness movement, restorationism, blacks, Baptists, pietism, Mennonites, Reformed and Lutherans. Some of these perspectives are overlooked in most works on the subject and it is in the fullness of its treatment that this book makes its greatest contribution. Evangelicals will be prompted to see the vastness of their identity and look beyond their own traditions. The contributions on Adventism, restorationists, pietists and Lutherans are especially helpful in this regard. Persons of Reformed persuasion can benefit greatly by the discussions of pentecostal and holiness traditions and those latter two can profit from the discussion of the "Self-Consciously Reformed." Norman Kraus, from his Mennonite perspective, critiques and challenges evangelicals.

Milton G. Sernett writes a succinct and valuable presentation on black religion which began as an offspring of early American white evangelicalism. The problem of the treatment of blacks by white evangelicals is disturbingly

and frankly presented. He also poses the black challenge for white evangelicals today: "Evangelical theology and evangelical ethics must meet on the common ground of equality and justice if the evangelical identity is to bridge racially discrete Christian communions" (p. 145).

George M. Marsden contributes the essay on fundamentalism declaring that a critical problem in defining that movement is the fact that it is "constantly changing" (p. 23). He refers to subdivisions of the movement which have been the product of this change, basically due to schism. Identifying a type of fundamentalism with dispensationalism, Marsden does, however, present problems for the thesis of Ernest Sandeen that has equated the two movements. Especially interesting in the unfolding of his discussion of broader fundamentalism is the kinship Marsden witnesses between neo-evangelicals and fundamentalists whose battles "have been so fierce precisely because they are particularly close relatives within an extended family" (p. 33).

Timothy Weber contributes a helpful chapter on the development of American premillennialism and its place in evangelicalism. In the process, Weber finds himself caught in the dilemma of the question of whether *evangelicalism* or *evangelicalisms*. In this article it becomes apparent that little if any editing was done on these papers. Footnote number 51 refers to a presentation by Craig Blasing as unpublished, which it was at the time of the deliverance of Weber's paper at the AAR meeting, but was published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* in two installments in 1988.

Typographical errors in other articles demonstrate this same lack of editing. On page 108 *church* is rendered three times as *chruch*, twice in the same sentence, and *evangelical* is misspelled. Other such errors are a distraction to the reader.

The editors conclude the book with arguments pertaining to evangelicalism as a term to be dismissed or retained, providing an appropriate capstone to an excellent work which leaves the reader thinking about and appreciative of the breadth of evangelicalism, evangelicalisms or whatever else one would call them (or it).

RONALD T. CLUTTER  
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*The Mission of the Church in the World: A Biblical Theology*, by Roger E. Hedlund. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. Pp. 300. Paper.

Dr. Roger E. Hedlund is coordinator and lecturer at the McGavran Institute in Madras, India. Because of his hands-on missionary experience in an Eastern context, he brings a stimulating viewpoint of the biblical text to western readers. In his Preface to the Asian Edition (1985), Hedlund states his desire to fill a gap in missiological literature in India by providing a "thorough exegetical study of the missionary theology of the Bible" (p. 14). That contribution has now come to the Western world as God's eternal redemptive purpose is carefully traced throughout both Testaments—from the garden to Paradise.

The Old Testament is given its rightful place as it unfolds God's redemptive purposes. The book is evenly divided between the Testaments, giving Old Testament revelation a missiological emphasis that is often neglected. Hedlund

probes each of the literary divisions of the Old Testament and finds God's mission. For example, he states, "Mission is from God. It is God who works in and through Israel for the salvation of the nations. Their concern, which runs through Scripture, derives from God" (p. 73). The author carefully selects passages in the various genres of Old Testament literature to investigate their missionary significance. The reader is rewarded with many insights into redemptive history as the record of the Old Testament unfolds.

The intertestamental period was a time of Jewish missionary activity. The Jewish population greatly increased, and a new category of people, the "God-fearers," came into being. In this way the "Jewish mission prepared the way for the Christian mission" (p. 147). Hedlund's insights here are helpful.

The second half of the book deals with the fulfillment of Old Testament redemptive expectations. In the words of the author, "... in the New Testament the gospel becomes universal. There is no difference between Jew and non-Jew (Rom. 2:11, 3:9; Gal. 3:28). The largely implicit Old Testament concept finds fulfillment in the New" (p. 152).

The author stands for the exclusiveness of Christ as over against the claims of non-Christian religions such as Hinduism (pp. 166-69). In the light of the Eastern context in which the book was written, this "radical exclusiveness" of biblical teaching is even more significant.

Hedlund discusses the concepts of the kingdom of God and the Church and their distinctions. The Great Commission, the significance of Pentecost, the founding of the church and the role of culture are all related to God's mission.

The role of the apostles, especially Paul's, comes in for careful analysis. Chapter 23, "Theologian, Strategist, and Activist," concerning Paul, is a significant contribution to the book.

The author's background in Eastern religious thought gives dimension and clarity as he deals with cultural encounters (Chapter 24). He discusses in some detail the equipment and gifts the Lord has provided for the Church to carry out its world mission (Chapter 25). The book closes with a discussion of the missiological contribution of the general Epistles and the missionary perspective of the Book of Revelation.

An extensive bibliography, including a number of sources from India, adds a valuable dimension to the text. Indexes of Scripture, authors, and subjects are helpful.

Then reader will no doubt find areas of disagreement, but Dr. Hedlund is to be commended for this serious study of God's mission from the garden lost to Paradise restored.

PAUL A. BEALS  
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST SEMINARY

*The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*, by Harry S. Stout. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991. Pp. 301. Paper.

This unconventional biography of a great eighteenth century evangelist is bound to stir controversy, for it portrays Whitefield as a fundamentally egotistical

person who sought fame through theatrical preaching of the Gospel. Harry S. Stout, a graduate of Calvin College and now professor of American religious history at Yale University, has compiled an impressive amount of information to support his view, and nothing in his argument appears to be inherently impossible. Whitefield might have been a sincere preacher of God's Word who saw no conflict between that calling and the pursuit of personal reputation. Stout leads readers through his subject's life episode-by-episode and draws them toward acceptance of his interpretation. Because of the author's skill in writing and argumentation, many people will accept his conclusions readily. There are, nevertheless, substantial reasons to question it.

Although Whitefield, in his youth, loved the theater and showed considerable talent as an actor, it is only an assumption that he later made the pulpit his stage and relied upon his thespian abilities to convert people to Christ. Stout asserts, "before Whitefield, everybody knew the difference between preaching and acting. With Whitefield's preaching it was no longer clear what was church and what was theater" (p. xix). This makes it appear that the evangelist was chiefly a talented manipulator of emotions for whom technique took precedence over substance in preaching. As he appears in this biography, Whitefield, the *medium*, was far more important than Christ, the *message*.

Stout writes about "the conflicting impulses that raged in the young evangelist, pitting a deep-set piety against a determined ambition to be 'somebody' in the cause of Christ" (p. 2). This is an attempt at mind-reading. How could this author or anyone else know what went on in Whitefield's brain? It is evident that Professor Stout has tried to psychoanalyze his subject, as when he refers to Whitefield's "inferiority-based tension" (p. 4), and the remark about his being "a person uneasy with his own masculinity" (p. 7). Is this a faint suggestion that Whitefield was a latent homosexual?

Throughout this book readers will encounter uncomplimentary accounts of George Whitefield's preaching, his methods, and his personal life. Some of the criticisms are appropriate, for the evangelist had his faults. According to Stout, Whitefield believed in extra-biblical revelation through dreams, and he depicted the New Birth in terms of feelings with little regard for doctrine. So long as large crowds attended his meetings, the preacher never doubted the validity of his methods. He endorsed female preachers warmly but was coldly indifferent toward his own wife.

Even though there is no overt hostility toward Whitefield in this book, those who read it uncritically will probably develop a strong disdain for him. Stout is careful to attest that his subject was deeply devout and tireless in his ministry, rigorously honest in financial matters, and charitable toward the needy, especially the slaves in America. His motive was, however, this author wants us to believe, at least partly the desire for fame.

The greatest flaw in this book is the complete absence of documentation, although the author has done extensive research. Since this is a new and disputable interpretation of Whitefield, thorough verification from sources is necessary. Without it this presentation is unconvincing.

JAMES EDWARD MCGOLDRICK  
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

*So You're Looking for a New Preacher: A Guide for Pulpit Nominating Committees*, by Elizabeth Achtemeier. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. 62. Paper.

Elizabeth Achtemeier, adjunct professor of Bible and homiletics at Union Theological Seminary, wants to make sure no one misses her purpose for writing this book. She states it clearly in her first sentence: "This little book is intended to help pulpit nominating committees select good *preachers* to call to their pulpits" (her emphasis). From the beginning Achtemeier makes her major conviction clear: while a minister must fulfill many responsibilities, "nothing [a church's] minister does will be more important than preaching" (p. 4). With this settled, the author seeks to provide some help for those who are responsible to find the next preacher for their church's vacant pulpit.

The book's first section, only 7 pages, tells how to organize a pulpit nominating committee. Achtemeier recognizes that denominations and churches differ in the procedure, but the generic counsel she provides about personnel and procedures helps. Her list of thirteen steps in the search process will provide direction for many, particularly those involved in a pastoral search for the first time. The suggestion "to acknowledge by letter all dossiers and tapes that you receive. . . . [and to] let a candidate know when he or she is no longer under consideration" (p. 9) as a matter of common courtesy is especially appreciated. This gets overlooked far too frequently.

The remainder of the book tells the reader how to find a good preacher. The chapter's subdivisions accurately indicate what's included: e.g., Pitfalls and Perils, What is Good Preaching?, You are Calling Your Resident Theologian, Try to Forget the Stereotypes, Do Not Be Too Hasty or Easily Satisfied. Achtemeier advocates selecting a candidate who is both orthodox in doctrine and active in devotional practice and she provides several objective questions which the committee might ask to gain necessary information in these areas. She sets forth demanding Biblical standards, worthy of the pastoral position. Her experience in homiletics enables her to present objective evaluation guides for good preaching. These should aid a serious pulpit committee and would even help preachers who dare to examine the quality of their efforts.

It is not surprising that Achtemeier argues for consideration of possible candidates without gender consideration. In support she cites references of several Scripture texts for those who "are unaware that women served as leaders and preachers for the early church." Here she affirms more than the texts do and some might experience some frustration at that point. Achtemeier's position on candidates who have been divorced will be equally troublesome for some. She suggests that divorce "should not be an *automatic* reason for disqualifying a candidate" (emphasis hers) and goes on to list "some legitimate reasons for divorce . . . such as chronic alcoholism, abuse, persistent infidelity, and mental illness."

Including some bibliographic help, especially in the area of church self-assessment, would strengthen the work. Achtemeier wisely advocates that the pulpit committee know the "congregation's needs and character" before the search. She affirms "some churches conduct self-studies . . . and such self-studies are helpful." She does not, however, provide a committee with any direction toward resources which might aid them in such a study. Most committees need such help.

The need for this book is real. Many pastors have given their church leaders no instruction concerning how to conduct a search process. Pulpit committees frequently flounder around unproductively for weeks before they finally understand how to manage the task before them. Achtemeier's book provides much help for pulpit nominating committees. It would also profit seminary students seeking their first pastorate and those already in vocational ministry but seeking a new place of service.

DAVID F. COLMAN

GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

*The Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge: A Christian Perspective*, by John Ankerberg and John Weldon. Chicago: Moody Press, 1990. Pp. 333. Paper.

This highly readable, thoroughly interesting book presents a penetrating analysis and critique of Freemasonry which its authors contend is an anti-Christian religion. John Ankerberg and John Weldon are competent researchers and writers who here present compelling arguments and a wealth of evidence to support their contention.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this study is the manner in which they have allowed Masons to speak for themselves on all points of controversy between the lodges and biblical Christianity. Ankerberg and Weldon consulted Masonic leaders across America and Europe in order to obtain their recommendations concerning what to read about Masonry. As a consequence, quotations from primary sources abound throughout this book. The highly influential Masonic authors Albert Mackey, Manly P. Hall, and Joseph Fort Newton appear to be the most important sources that Ankerberg and Weldon have employed.

To show how influential Masonry has been, these authors relate that fourteen American presidents and fourteen vice-presidents have been lodge members, as have been justices of the Supreme Court and numerous members of Congress. This reviewer was surprised to learn that, despite their evangelical professions of faith, Senators Mark Hatfield and Jesse Helms are Masons.

It is evident that Ankerberg and Weldon intend this book chiefly for Christians who maintain membership in Masonic organizations because they are ignorant of their anti-Christian teachings and practices. *The Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge* is also an eloquent, persuasive warning to non-Masons who might be inclined to join.

This important book shows clearly that Masonry teaches the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man and that it proclaims salvation by works. It denigrates Jesus Christ to the role of profound religious teacher while denying his deity, and it affirms the basic goodness rather than sinfulness of human nature. In fact, this study lists a host of anti-biblical doctrines and practices that typify various Masonic rituals. Directly or indirectly, Masonry conflicts with almost every cardinal belief of orthodox Christianity.

Ankerberg and Weldon have made their case well. Masonry is, indeed, a non-Christian religion despite all of its disclaimers to be a religion at all.

JAMES EDWARD MCGOLDRICK  
CEDARVILLE COLLEGE



*Project Earth: Preserving the World God Created*, by William B. Badke. Portland: Multnomah Press, 1991. Pp. 166. Paper.

In *Project Earth* William Badke argues that Christians are obligated to take care of the environment. This recent addition to Multnomah's Critical Concern series is written on a popular level and is designed to motivate the evangelical community to fulfill its environmental duty. It is on the order of Granberg-Michaelson's *Ecology and Life*, with personal antidotes starting each chapter.

Badke builds his argument for environmental involvement around five witnesses of creation. The first two are bright witnesses: creation bears witness to the glory of the Creator and to the nurturing power of God. It is the task of the believer to enhance these two witnesses of creation. The Christian duty is linked with imaging God, which is understood functionally (ruling as God's representative) rather than substantially. As man images God, as will be ruling properly and enhancing the bright witnesses of creation.

When Adam fell, God modified his nurturing of nature so that Adam would have to toil for his food. "God became a defiler of the earth." God attacked the earth and became an ecological enemy. Badke supports this statement with the curse of Genesis 3, the Deluge, and the covenant curse of Deuteronomy 28. God's attack on nature has produced two more witnesses, the dark witnesses of penalty and precariousness (or the uncertainty of life). The witnesses are evidently witnesses to men. The bright witnesses testify of God's glory and providence to lead men to Christ, and the dark witnesses warn of God's judgment and the possibility of death to drive men back to him. Only God has the right to damage what he made. He only does this when we refuse his bright witnesses.

Badke tries to resolve the tension between God's attacking the earth and man's duty to protect it by saying that it is God's "self-imposed mandate to do what is required to bring us back to him." We should not attack the earth because this is not our mandate. Our mandate is to preserve the bright witnesses to help men come to God.

Ecological disasters and natural catastrophes are part of the dark witnesses that warn of a divine retribution against unrepentant man. This retribution reaches a climax when God uncreates all that he made. Badke suggests that the ecological crisis could be God's final call for humanity to turn back to him. He argues that the earth will be totally destroyed and remade, not restored, as Granberg-Michaelson suggests. Badke reasons that everything touched by sin must die before it can be reborn, and this includes the earth. Only the death of the earth will purge it from its corruption and make it fit to remain in God's presence.

The fifth witness is a determined effort of believers to heal the earth and to cease contributing to the dark witnesses. It is the witness of reclamation which encompasses renewing the role of imaging God, restoring broken relations with the environment, and returning to tending the garden. It testifies that God is able to make all things new.

The approach follows the theanthropocentrism of the dominant tradition of Western theology in which everything revolves around the divine-human relationship with nature being left on the fringes. Rather than the earth being the

stage for the history of human redemption, as with Barth or Brunner, it is the mirror of human morality and faithfulness. The ecological problem is a spiritual problem, for it "merely echoes our condition before a holy and increasingly angry God." Justification for environmental involvement is found in subordinating it to the Great Commission. This implies that it would be improper to care for nature solely for nature's sake. Preserving the witness of creation is done to enhance the gospel message so humans might be saved.

*Project Earth* is somewhat of a maverick in that it hews its own course with very little interaction with the extensive literature since Lynn White's article. The appendix lists 50 things we can do to become involved. Also included are subject and scriptural indices.

RICHARD A. YOUNG  
CHATTANOOGA, TN

*Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?* by Winfried Corduan. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. Pp. 150. Paper.

Mysticism is making itself increasingly felt as an influence within evangelicalism. Many evangelical protestants are avidly reading Catholic mystics like Thomas Merton and Henri J. M. Nouwen. Within Protestantism itself, popular books like Richard Foster's *The Celebration of Discipline* advance certain mystical practices as applicable to contemporary Christian living. Notable ex-protestants such as Thomas Howard and Sheldon VanAuken identify the mystical aspects of Roman Catholicism as extremely attractive and influential in their own conversions. Even the "Third Wave" movement within evangelicalism has a distinct mystical strain to it.

In this regard, Winfried Corduan's *Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?* is a pertinent book for those interested in studying the subject. Corduan explores the nature of mystical experience and to a certain extent critiques from a New Testament standpoint the claims of mystics of all faiths.

Corduan's book deals mainly with the philosophical aspects of mysticism, and it is here that many will find a major barrier to the book's usefulness. It often seems to dwell too much on the very technical aspects of mysticism and does not address the questions most evangelical Christians would want to ask about the subject.

The first part of the book, for example, spends a great deal of time quibbling over the definition of mysticism and exploring esoteric aspects of understanding the term. This would be fine for a dissertation or an advanced study of the subject, but it is probably beyond the interest level of most evangelicals who would take the time to read a book on it.

Corduan also seems to deviate from the logic of his approach by unfairly favoring Christian mysticism. He says of such medieval mystics as St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, "how shocked these saints would be to find out that actually when they thought they experienced the love of Jesus, they merely experienced 'mysticism' under one particular interpretation!" (54). Is this to say that such bizarre and grotesque mystical experiences as those of Juliana of Norwich are valid simply because Juliana was a Christian? Or that the ecstatic visions of Bernard are to be given credence because he was a Christian? These are

questions that deserve a better answer than he gives. He does later say that it is "a basic trait of the human mind that it can undergo a mystical experience" and that a variety of causes might bring the mystical experience about (76-77). Still, he seems to retain the annoying habit of automatically granting validity to a Christian mystical experience: "... one could say that it [the mystical experience] can also be part of the experience of linking up with a genuine reality, as a Christian might claim for God" (77). But the objective existence of God does not validate a mystical experience even if God is claimed to be the origin of that experience. Corduan's approach leaves the reader with no way of judging whether a mystical experience is valid under any circumstances.

The chapter on "Mysticism in Christianity" is a bit better. There is a good discussion of Meister Eckhart, St. Teresa, and St. John of the Cross. This is off-set, however, by a too-detailed description of Eastern Orthodox mysticism. Also, the chapter on "Recent Writers" is, again, too esoteric to be of any general interest.

The last chapter addresses New Testament mysticism, but in this chapter the author again falls prey to an overly technical analysis of theories on whether or not the New Testament condones, facilitates, or encourages mysticism.

If this review has seemed unkind to the work it examines, it is because of the expectations the book's title raises. *Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?* suggests more than a technical study of the philosophical questions clustering around the issues of mysticism. It suggests a survey of the influence mysticism has had and is having *upon* evangelicalism in the past and at present. But such things are not forthcoming in the text. No mention is made, for instance, of Puritan mystics such as Richard Baxter, who more or less set the patterns for Protestant mysticism. The writings of such influential twentieth-century mystics as Nouwen and Merton are passed over, as are the works of such authors as A. W. Tozer and Andrew Murray, whose influence upon fundamentalism and evangelicalism has been great, and who both bordered on mystical understanding's of the believer's relationship to God.

The book is not without its uses. If a reader wanted to delve into the philosophical basis of mysticism, be abreast of current theories on the subject, and generally approach the topic from an entirely speculative and theoretical angle, *Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?* would be a good place to start. The author does a good job of outlining the basic ideas of mysticism in scholarly and intellectual discussions. The bibliography is an excellent tool by which to become familiar with the literature on the philosophical aspects of mysticism. In the final analysis, the work is theoretical and abstract rather than practical and informative.

DAVID W. LANDRUM  
GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

*The C. S. Lewis Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to His Life, Thought and Writings*, by Colin Duriez. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. Pp. 255. Paper.

Many readers of C. S. Lewis have been introduced to him by means of only one of his many types of literature. Those introduced to his fantasy see

him as primarily a writer of children's books. Those who began with his moral and theological writings see him as primarily a religious author. Yet part of the appeal of Lewis as a 20th century phenomenon is his contribution of works written in a variety of literary styles. Often, to their detriment, readers are unaware of Lewis's other works of literary criticism, science fiction, poetry, sermons, etc. which fill out the whole picture of the writer. Furthermore, Lewis cannot be read for long without the reader being overwhelmed by literary allusions and influences from a wide spectrum of people and ideas—often unknown to the average reader.

This literary gap is bridged by Colin Duriez's *C. S. Lewis Handbook*. This handbook provides an introduction to the persons in Lewis's life (from his Aunt Annie to friend Charles Williams), characters in Lewis's books (from Aslan to Wormwood), summaries of his writings (*The Abolition of Man* to *Voyage to Venus*), and a wealth of other useful aids to an informed reading of Lewis. Helpful discussions of significant motifs in the thought of Lewis (such as idealism, romanticism, myth, and allegory) and good summaries of major influences on his writings (such as George MacDonald, G. K. Chesterton and friend J. R. R. Tolkien) are easily available.

The *Handbook* gives good, but selective, descriptions of Lewis's own ideas. For example, there is a discussion of his view of heaven, but none explicitly of hell or purgatory. Furthermore, the book lacks specific articles on important literary influences on Lewis (which, sadly, are often unknown to the modern reader), such as Edmund Spenser, John Milton, Dante, etc. To include these would make the guide more useful to the Lewis audience.

The bibliographies of books both by and about Lewis will be a real help to anyone who wishes to get to know the man and his writings better. The *Handbook* is a good contribution to Lewis studies. Colin Duriez has done a real service to both old and new readers of C. S. Lewis.

MICHAEL A. VAN HORN

GRAND RAPIDS BAPTIST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

*Who Owns the Land? The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, by Stanley A. Ellisen. Portland: Multnomah Press, 1991. Pp. 248. Paper.

This timely volume, with its attention-catching title, addresses a topic that concerns everyone who is the least bit conversant with current events. The struggle for control in the Middle East, centering upon the conflicting claims regarding a small piece of real estate known generally as Palestine, has occupied the front pages of newspapers for decades, and has been an international problem far longer. The author is the well-known professor of Bible History and Prophecy at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon. His involvement with this subject began with a trip to the Middle East in 1952 as part of the American Christian Palestine Committee, and he has kept close touch with events ever since.

The book contains a comprehensive and very readable resume of Jewish persecution history, beginning with Israel's expulsion from the land in 586 B.C. Excellent annotated maps depict such events as Jewish expulsions from Europe

in the Middle Ages, the various border proposals put forth in this century, the U. N. Partition plan, sources of the Jewish migration back to Palestine, the surrounding Arab nations with their populations and political changes, and border changes of Israel since independence.

The author suggests that the government use of pogroms in Europe marks the beginning of anti-Semitism. He notes that the first use of the term "anti-Semitism" occurred in 1879 in a pamphlet by Wilhelm Marr, a German agitator (p. 52). Ellisen calls the emergence of Zionism at the turn of this century a "crucial turning point in Jewish history," as it "put feet to ancient hopes and dreams for a Jewish homeland" (p. 59). It was Zionism which added militancy to Jewish longings for a return.

In tracing Jewish history during the twelve years of Hitler's regime, the author notes five stages of the persecution rampage (pp. 82ff.) Noting that these policies were implemented throughout German-occupied Europe, he asks why the populace collaborated so completely (with a few exceptions, of course), and why the rest of the world protested so feebly. He also reminds the readers (p. 93) of the irony inherent in the situation where the Allies showed such remarkable consideration for the Arab states, even though they supported the Axis powers throughout World War II, while making it most difficult for Israel to establish itself (Britain in particular being most unhelpful). Such anomalies do make one wonder whether more than political concerns were at work here.

In the author's discussion of the Intifada ("uprising") which has brought such unrest in Israel during the last four years, he explains one reason for Jewish concern which rarely is mentioned in the news media. If no Jewish settlements were allowed in the occupied territories, the much larger birthrate among Arabs would soon cause them to outnumber the Jewish residents. This demographic principle, given sufficient time, would shift the balance of the region. As Ellisen puts it, "The Palestinians could win the battle in their bedrooms" (p. 135). It is this factor which propels the Israelis to establish new settlements for Jewish residents, especially the hundreds of new immigrants from Russia.

As Ellisen attempts to evaluate the claims of Israeli and Arab for the land, he puts the problem in graphic form, "How do you unscramble scrambled eggs?" (p. 144). He summarizes Arab claims to Palestine under five heads, three historical and two religious. (1) Their long residency in the land. (2) The British-Hussein agreement. (3) Their claim to mini-holocaust reparation (i.e. refugee camp suffering). (4) Appeal to Abrahamic ancestry. (5) Arab claim to Jerusalem as al-Quds, "The Holy."

These are countered by five Jewish propositions. (1) Their ancient and continuous residency in the land. Israel occupied the land for two thousand years before the Arabs took it. Furthermore, the land had been ruled by the Turks, not the Arabs, for about 400 years when the British conquered the area in 1917. (2) The Balfour Declaration. (3) Their need for a haven from the Holocaust. (4) Their appeal to the Abrahamic covenant. (5) The Jews' religious attachment to Jerusalem.

Each claim is evaluated in light of the counter-claim, and the author attempts to be even-handed, although his perspective is clearly Biblical rather than Koranic. In discussing modern proposals to resolve the conflict, he considers the

option of an independent Palestinian state. The unlikelihood that such a state could sustain itself politically, militarily, or economically in the dog-eat-dog Arab world of the Middle East is duly noted. The impracticality of imposing Western democratic ideals upon the Arab world is pointed out. In a quotation from Walter Reich, he reminds us, "Are there any democratic countries among the Arab states? Was anybody elected in those countries? Sadat? Mubarak? Assad? Democratic notions are simply irrelevant in this part of the world." Ellisen also discusses the more viable option of Palestinian autonomy under Israeli sovereignty, and notes advantages and problems. Such a procedure would be entirely consistent with Palestinian history in the region for centuries, inasmuch as the Palestinian have always lived under outside control (whether British Mandate, Ottoman Turks, etc.). However, it would not solve PLO demands or those of the other Arab states which have vowed revenge upon Israel.

The final chapter relates the issue of Biblical prophecy. The author reminds the reader that while the Abrahamic covenant promised the land to Israel forever, the Palestinian covenant required obedience from those who would occupy it. Failure to obey caused God to allow Israel to be driven from their land time and time again. Inasmuch as the nation is still largely existing in unbelief, Ellisen concludes, "To put it bluntly, she has no biblical right to the covenant land" (p. 174). The present State of Israel allows all sorts of deviation from Jewish orthodoxy in its policy of toleration except for Jewish Christians. Even Jewish atheists can become citizens, but believers in Jesus may not. Teachers of prophecy would do well to remember this caution when discussing the current world situation.

This is an excellent book. In a comparatively short compass, it covers the key factors in a readable fashion, avoids the naive though pious pronouncements about Israel that come from some pulpits today, and briefs the reader well on a crucial issue of our day. I heartily recommend it.

HOMER A. KENT  
GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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